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[THE LOST ONE FOUND.]

## THE WHITE ROSE CHIEFTAIN;

OR,

### THE DISPUTED CROWN.

#### CHAPTER I.

Fair England's flower, in that sad day,  
Thy scented blossoms, red or white,  
Gleamed o'er the warriors' stern array,  
And named the fratricidal fight.

THE morning sunshine burned like an altar fire above the far-off mountains, kindling the fleecy mists which hung around them, till it seemed as if their golden splendour had risen from some alchemist's crucible, flushing the waters of the Thames, the spires and domes of busy London, and the gray walls and towers of Windsor Castle, and shining full on the spirited scene in the courtyard. Superb steeds with fiery eyes and dilated nostrils, trembling in every limb in their eagerness to be away on the excited chase, which their sagacity told them was at hand; graceful hounds crouched here and there, with their heads erect, and their acute ears listening for the well-known signal for their own release; falconers with hooded falcons fastened by silken leashes, and grooms and pages in royal livery, were moving to and fro, and everything wore an air of festal excitement.

Within the castle, too, you could hear the pattering of daintily shodden feet, occasional peals of laughter, or a snatch of some old hunting song; and now and then a pair of bright eyes peered through the windows to catch a glimpse of what was passing below. Suddenly the castle door was swung wide open, and the lord chamberlain appeared, on the threshold, and, after a brief survey of the preparations and a few hasty queries, exclaimed:

"The king, the king! Make way for the king to pass!"

The next moment there was a waving of plumes, the soft rustle of trailing robes, a sudden flash of jewels, and the sunshine struck across glittering

baldrics and dagger hilts, and a royal pageant filed through the arched portals and down the steps.

Foremost walked Henry VI., then the legal representative of the house of Lancaster, with his beautiful queen leaning on his arm, and followed by a brilliant retinue. He wore a hunting suit of velvet green, a hat with a long drooping feather, a costly baldric, a Damascus blade drawn through his girdle, and an elaborate sheaf of the choicest arrows, while he carried a bow of exquisite workmanship in his left hand. Queen Margaret's riding-habit of royal purple, with its broad collar of ermine, her cap, not unlike an ancient helmet in shape, and looped up at the side with a cluster of diamonds, and her delicate buff gauntlets, embroidered with gold, formed a striking and picturesque costume, lent a statelier aspect to her fine figure, and heightened the effect of her rare beauty.

At the appearance of the royal party grooms and pages bowed low, doffing their tasseled caps, and the noble lords of the retinue stood with uncovered heads, waiting till the arrangements should be completed. The king's equerry hastened to bring forward a powerful steed of jetty blackness, and gorgeously caparisoned with housings of crimson and gold. Henry sprang into the saddle, and in another instant the queen had mounted her favourite palfrey, and both sat erect and stately, gazing on the scene around them.

"Now for the chase, noble lords and ladies!" cried the king; "away, away, to Windsor Forest. Hubert, we are ready; unhood the bird and let the falcon fly! Follow, follow, on your fleetest hunters, gentlemen—we will have a day's sport among the deer in yonder forest, and forget the cares of state and the reckless efforts to wrest from us our royal heritage!"

As he spoke Henry lifted a bugle horn, suspended to his neck, and blew a blast which rang long and loud on the September air. At the signal the falcon was unhooded and went soaring far, far into the hazy depths of the tranquil sky; the graceful hounds sprang from their leashes, the king's equerry and groom vaulted into the saddle, and Henry, his

queen, and the rest of the gay hunting party dashed from the courtyard. On, on, on they swept, their hoof-beats ringing on the broad avenues of the park, their plumes dancing in the breeze, and their voices echoing out in light badinage as they ever and anon alluded to some bit of court gossip. Eyes that had grown heavy with care began to sparkle with mirth; pale faces flushed and weary hearts beat joyously that morning. There is nothing more exhilarating than a gallop in the open air and at an early hour; and when we add to that the excitement of the chase, which was such a favourite pastime in years gone by, we cannot wonder that the court of Henry VI., released from the restraints of etiquette, seemed like a troop of merry children hurrying to their own gleeful coronation, with the prospect of dancing around the Maypole.

King Henry had said that he was resolved to banish the cares of state, and for a time he forgot the commotions of England, and the conflicting claims which were soon to culminate in the far-famed Wars of the Roses.

At length the cavalcade paused on the verge of Windsor forest, arrested by a sudden blast of the king's bugle, and stood for a moment listening to the cry of the falcon, and the baying of the grayhounds which were even now in the depths of the dim, old wood. In another instant, however, Henry exclaimed:

"By our royal faith, it is scarcely fair to keep you from yonder enchanted ground! Forward, forward! let us see whether or not we are to have a dozen deer to take back to the castle!"

With these words he spurred on into the wood, followed by his retinue and greeted with respectful courtesy by the foresters stationed there to protect the king's game. What a lovely scene met the admiring eyes of the hunting-party as they entered the forest. How cool and green, and bowery it looked, with those long vistas opening before them; what magnificent arches rose above their heads, rivaling the fretted roof of the grandest cathedral; what clear streams went murmuring through shadowy leafage; how soft were the mosses which lay beneath



their feet; how fair were the wood flowers, blossoming in pleasant glades, and leaning over some crystal spring, as if to gaze at their own beauty in the water!

At the period of which I write England's forests retained much of the wild grandeur they had possessed in those remote years, when "the groves were Heaven's first temples," and Druid priestesses performed their mysterious rites in the wilderness. Art had not encroached upon nature as it has in the nineteenth century, and the forests of Sherwood and Windsor were something more than a park or grove. Deer lay crouched in friendly groups, or stood drinking from the cool, rocky brooks, with which the place abounded; the timid hare sprang through the dim arcades, and the partridge drummed in his secret haunt, while other wild birds filled the air with their songs.

As that sudden bugle blast echoed through the wilderness, blended with the baying of the dogs, the cry of the falcon, and the shouts of the hunters, the deer sprang away into the solitudes, which they fancied would be impenetrable to their pursuers; the hare nestled down in its covert, and the bird music melted from the air.

The royal party had proceeded a considerable distance when a young girl, who was by far the loveliest maid of honour in the queen's train, dropped her riding-whip and whirled, perceiving the misfortune, Margaret of Anjou laid her hand on the king's arm, and said:

"Hold, hold, my liege—draw rein, I pray you, for Lady Valentinia has lost both cap and whip."

As she spoke Henry and all the gentlemen of his party turned and looked back at a slender figure, clad in a blue habit, a fair girlish face, with the sunniest of brown eyes, a delicate peach blossom tint on the round cheeks, lips like half-closed rosebuds, and a shower of chestnut hair of that peculiar tint which you find on the pheasant's neck, and which poets call "golden bronze."

"Gallant cavaliers!" exclaimed Henry, "you hear what our royal lady says has befallen Lady Valentinia. Who will be the first to go in search of the lost articles while we wait for her return?"

"I shall deem it a great favour if I can be of any use to Lady Valentinia," said a young gentleman, whose family stood high at the court of Henry VI., and with a profound bow he rode toward the lady, who sat blushing beneath the admiring scrutiny to which she had been subjected.

"And I, and I!" was the exclamation which ran from lip to lip like wildfire, for there was not a cavalier in the party who would not have been proud to win Lady Valentinia's smile.

Several had gathered about her with kindly offers of assistance, when a quick, firm tread was heard approaching, and a forester, whose princely bearing would have seemed better adapted to a command among the king's men-at-arms or a seat in Parliament than in the recesses of the wood, advanced to the group of which Lady Valentinia made the central figure.

Bearing aloft a blue cap, from which floated a white heron's plume and a whip inlaid with silver and seed-pearls, he said, in a voice which haunted the girl long afterwards:

"Lady, it has fallen to the lot of a humble forester to find and restore the articles you lost in the wood." As he spoke he dropped on one knee and raised the cap and whip, adding, in a low tone: "If I were on a footing with these Lancastrian knights I would place it on your head, but as it is I can only worship at a distance."

The girl trembled and the crimson came and went in her bright young face when she grasped the cap and whip and attempted to murmur her thanks.

"Be assured," exclaimed the stranger, in reply, "I need no thanks; but the hour when I was so happy as to serve you will form a new era in my life."

The next instant he had risen and soon disappeared in the windings of a forest path.

"By St. George, that was right gallantly done," observed the king. "Look to it, my lords, that our foresters do not put you to shame when they bear themselves thus to the ladies of our court!"

Margaret of Anjou laughed, the gentlemen followed her example, and the party now began to dissolve, breaking up into brilliant fragments, as the forest grew more and more dense, and the path more intricate.

Margaret of Anjou was a fearless equestrienne and kept pace with Henry for a time, but some of her maids of honour growing timid and shrieking back when the chase began in good earnest she relied in her own palfrey and bade the grooms not to lose sight of her ladies.

All the noblemen had followed the king with the exception of Lord Pelham, the young cavalier who

had been the first to respond to Henry's call, and he still rode at the girl's bridle-rein, handsome and fascinating enough to have captivated a less guarded heart than Lady Valentinia's.

"Methinks you look very grave," cried a gay girl, casting a keen glance at his lordship.

"Ay," rejoined the young man, "I had no heart to follow the hunters—I tell you I have good reason for serious thought."

"And what, prithee, has befallen your lordship?"

"That is not for you to know," retorted Pelham; and leaning toward Valeria, he whispered, "the confession is for your ear alone."

"What can it be, my lord?"

"I believe I am jealous of the tall forester who paid you such homage not long ago, and had the privilege of restoring your missing cap."

The girl smiled as she replied:

"Jealousy must be a most unpleasant sensation."

"It is, indeed; but, on my honour, I am not jealous; to be jealous we must be deeply in love with some one, whose face is our day-star, and who holds our fate in her hands."

Valentinia gazed at him, and read the truth of his words in his look, tone and manner; but though seldom at a loss for a reply she could not articulate a syllable.

"Valentinia, Valentinia," twitted Lord Pelham, "I must speak to you alone—surely you can have no objection to granting me a few moments' private conversation with you to-day. For weeks I have been watching and waiting, and last night at the queen's hall I resolved to pour forth the story of my love; but there was no end to your partners, and weary—shall I say it?—indignant, I quitted the revels, and went to my room. Permit me to guide your palfrey into this by-path."

Ever Valentinia could answer he grasped her bridle rein and turned her horse's head into a vista, diverging from that which the queen and the rest of her maids of honour had thus far kept.

"Whither away so fast?" exclaimed Margaret of Anjou, pointing with her whip at Lord Pelham and his companion. "Know you not you are taking from us one of our own ladies?"

"Yes, your grace; I cry your mercy, and trust I can explain all to your satisfaction when we meet at the Hunter's Well."

"Go on, then; the Well is the wonted rendezvous for regal hunting-parties; but I should not fear to wager the crown jewels that we shall be there long before you and Lady Valentinia—we shall not move at a lover's pace."

Lord Pelham made some animated response, assuming a cheerfulness which belied his secret anxiety, and rode along the new path, while Queen Margaret and her ladies retained the other.

For a time after leaving their companions the pair rode onward in a constrained silence; but at length Pelham said:

"Valentinia, I have brought you here that I might declare the love which absorbs my whole being. By day my thoughts are full of you; by night your eyes, your voice, your smile haunt my dreams—you are my ideal, my divinity, and now I bring my offering to your feet! What say you, Valentinia, dearest? May I—dare I, hope for a return?"

The girl's burning blush had faded, and she looked pale and sad, but still sat silent.

"Speak!" exclaimed Pelham; "why are your lips thus sealed, Valentinia, when my whole soul goes out in homage to you?"

"If I hesitate, my lord," replied the girl, "it is because I regret to pain you; 'tis hard to reject an honest love, even though I cannot give you the faintest ray of hope for the future."

The young man started, and the proud blood of the Pelhams kindled his eyes and flamed his cheek.

"You do not love me, then, Lady Valentinia," he muttered; "you have no encouragement to offer?"

"None, my lord; I esteem you as a friend, but I could not think of giving you a dearer title."

"Valentinia Lyndhurst, I have utterly misjudged you—staked all my chances on this desperate throw, and lost! You have slighted my love, humbled my pride, swept away my rosy dreams, and if ever I should find love transformed to hate, woe be to you, Valentinia!"

With these words he turned sharply from her and darted off on his fleet hunter like an arrow from a bow.

"Heaven help me!" moaned Lady Valentinia, and sank from her saddle senseless.

How long she lay there it was impossible for her to tell, for time had become a blank; but when she awoke to consciousness she found herself alone amid the fastnesses of the forest. She was lying on the mossy turf, the wood flowers swigling to and fro

like fairy bells, and the birds calling to each other among the boughs.

"What can have happened?" she asked herself, dreamily.

And then the incidents of the day flashed back upon her with lightning-like rapidity.

She remembered the chase, the loss of her cap and whip, the meeting with the tall forester, Lord Pelham's declaration, and the strange conduct which had rendered her unconscious.

She looked about for her palfrey, thinking that she could not have been there many moments, but the animal had been trained to the chase, and had of course been lured on by the familiar baying of the dogs and shouts of the hunters.

"Bees has fled," she said, audibly; "and what can I do in the heart of Windsor Forest? The hunting-party are to meet at the usual rendezvous, and I will try and make the best of my way thither. If I can reach the place in season to join them, I shall go back to the castle oak, in spite of this misadventure; but if not"—and her cheek blanched at the thought—"I am lost!"

As she spoke she turned on her previous journey; but, bewildered as she was, every footstep led her farther and farther from the point which she wished to gain.

Meanwhile the hunting-party had been unusually successful, and, with an abundance of deer and wild birds along across their horses, they gathered at the Hunter's Well. The fountain to which they always paid a visit when on a hunting expedition was simply a rock spring, bubbling up in a greenwood glade; skilful artisans had been employed to pave the margin with mosaic work, force the water into a marble tank, or give it any artificial appearance. The moss lay soft and green on the bank, as it had, mayhap, before the Norman conquest, and a few aquatic plants waved their broad leaves and delicate petals in the breeze. Rude seats, formed of oak and graceful antlers curiously twined together, stood here and there, and drinking-urns fashioned from the bark of trees were suspended to the young branches, which shaded the spot, by heavy iron chains. As the hunting-party came filing to the rendezvous the king again joined Margaret of Anjou, who had come up with the ladies, and, dismounting, the royal pair seated themselves in one of the rustic chairs, which contrasted strikingly with the throne of England.

"Now, my good Hertford," cried the monarch, addressing the butler, whose duty it had been to provide refreshments for the party, "unpack your hamper, and let us see what you have to gratify a hunter's keen appetite."

"Ay, ay, your majesty," rejoined Hertford, and he produced basket after basket, filled with cold meats, tempting pastry, and the choicest wines. The refreshments were soon spread on the grass, and the sunshine burning goldenly above the tree-tops ever and anon shot down into the beautiful banqueting-hall, where it lingered on Queen Margaret's sunny hair, and struck across the old Osbury who in the tall flasks till they seemed mantling high with the "elixir of gold."

"May it please your grace," said the obsequious butler, "everything is in readiness; dinner waits your royal pleasure."

"Have all our party arrived?" asked the king.

"All save Lord Pelham and Lady Valentinia," replied Margaret of Anjou, with a significant look; "there is too good reason for their absence, I fancy, or the young noble would not have struck into another path with her, leaving us to make the best of our way toward the Hunter's Well!"

Several of the gentlemen made some jocose answer, and the queen went on:

"If he had accepted our wager, ladies, he would have lost, and been obliged to pay the value of the crown jewels."

"Yes, yes, royal madame; a lover's pace has proved slower than ours, and we will give him no mercy as we ride homeward."

"What think you, gentlemen?" said the king, "shall we wait longer for the rest?"

"No, no, your majesty; 'tis useless waiting for a pair of lovers, who may not reach the shadow of Windsor Castle till midnight. Pelham has neither eye nor ear for anybody save the Lady Valentinia Lyndhurst, and will not descend to such ordinary work as a dinner in the woods."

All this occasioned much merriment, and in the midst of it the dinner began, the beautiful queen dispensing her hospitalities as royally as if she had been in her own palace.

As the butler knelt to present the king's goblet Henry exclaimed:

"Set the cup down, Hertford; I will first take a draught from the well and try to believe in the old legend that whatever I wish as I quaff the water will come to pass."

He rose, and, moved toward the spring, bent low

over it, and, filling a goblet, added, in a tone audible to Margaret only:

"Here at the Hunter's Well, I wish for a long and prosperous reign, and to hold the throne of England for my family without the interference of the White Rose Chieftains!"

"I wonder whether such a favour as had been accorded His Majesty would have been ours in like circumstances," said a cavalier, who stood near the royal presence.

"Nay, it is only granted to kings," replied a courtier standing hard by. "What, prithee, would you wish?"

"That Lord Pelham might never win Lady Valentinia!"

"First, list, here he comes!"

At that moment there was a violent rustling among the shrubbery, and Lord Pelham appeared mounted on his favourite hunter. He looked pale and stern, but bowed with his wonted courtesy to the king and queen and seemed to take in everything at a single sweeping glance.

"Where is Lady Valentinia?" asked Margaret of Anjou.

"I cannot say, royal madam. I am as surprised as yourself not to see her at the rendezvous."

"Sir knight," resumed the queen, "we entrusted her to your care, and had no doubt you would bring her safe to the Well. If we should return to Windsor Castle without her the old earl would hold us responsible for her loss."

As the last words died away from her lips her cheeks were heard approaching, and one of the maids of honour said:

"The Valentinia's palfrey, but it is flying towards us!"

The animal was now stopped by a groom, who grasped the bridle-rein and soon succeeded in checking his furious speed. The palfrey had evidently taken fright, for his eyes flamed like burning coals, his graceful limbs quivered, and his glossy coat was flecked with foam.

"Lord Pelham," said the king, with an air of grave decision, "to you I turn to explain this mystery."

"My liege," rejoined the young man, his finer feelings gaining the ascendancy over him—his wounded pride and keen consideration, "I may as well speak frankly concerning the incidents which I was too proud to divulge till now. Lady Valentinia could not reciprocate my love, and in no enviable mood I left her in a solitary ride through Windsor Forest."

"And how long ago?"

"It must have been two hours at least."

"You acted most ungalantly and I cannot let it pass without a severe reprimand."

"I deserve it, my liege, but I will endeavour to expiate my error by a thorough search through the woods."

"King Henry and you, sir knight," exclaimed a voice, which vibrated on the air, and the tall forester who had restored the missing cap and whip advanced and stood before the royal pair and Lord Pelham, "leave the search to those who are familiar with the woods and not to strangers."

"Why, you have not been long in our service," said the monarch.

"But, my liege, I have made good use of my time, and the head forester declares I know the paths better than many of your majesty's hunters have in these five years. If Lady Valentinia is in the forest, living or dead, I will find and restore her to you."

With the same fleet step which had astonished them in the morning, he retired from the glade, and while most of the hunting-party mounted their steeds and commenced their return to the castle, Lord Pelham and two other gentlemen set out in different directions to search for the missing girl.

## CHAPTER II.

Robert closed in and Valentinia Lyndhurst was still wandering to and fro in the utmost bewilderment. Wistfully she had watched the twilight purple deepen into dusk, and the evening star light her pale torch far above the grand old trees. At length the young moon had risen fair and clear, a serene vestal wandering on to some distant temple in the west, but only faint gleams filtered through the foliage, and often the boughs met overhead in such compact arches that she was forced to grope through the gloom. Wild birds, startled by the day's chase, swooped by, shrieking in her ears; she could distinctly hear the shrill bark of the fox, and now and then the blood chilled in her veins as she recalled stories she had heard of the wolves still lurking in the depths of the forest. The farther she proceeded, however, the more intricately she became involved in the labyrinthine mazes of the woods, and at last she crept into a

covert just as the moon was going down, and moodily she said to herself:

"It is in vain—in vain! I must wait here till morning."

Sinking into her hiding-place, she thought long and bitterly of Pelham's proposal, his anguished countenance after the rejection of his suit, her swoon in the forest, the flight of her palfrey, her fruitless attempts to reach the Well, and all the perils by which she was surrounded. In imagination she pictured the meeting in the usual rendezvous, the surprise, and perhaps alarm, which her absence would occasion, and wondered how Pelham would answer for her non-appearance, when he promised to bring her safely to the Hunter's Well. Then she thought of the hunting-party returning to Windsor Castle, her father's terrible grief at her absence, and the wild unrest which would keep him from his pillow while hour after hour dragged by. An avalanche of suffering was crowded into that night, and when the morning broke, rosy with the dews of day, she rose and staggered onward, faint and giddy. More than one cavalier in the court of Henry VI. had professed to love her devotedly, and her lip curled with a mocking smile, as she muttered:

"I have learned a lesson to-night, and that is not to measure love by professions. Nobody in the king's hand cared enough for me to come to my rescue, and not even the handsome forester has crossed my path, as I hoped he might."

Full of these gloomy reflections, Lady Valentinia resumed her weary march through the woods, but at length, tired and disheartened, she once more sank down upon the sod, murmuring:

"Heaven pity me, I must die here alone!"

"Nay, nay, lady," exclaimed the forester, who had promised to search the woods till he should find some traces of her; "I trust you will have a long and pleasant life yet. The best is yet to be! Thank Heaven, thank Heaven!"

A sudden glow shot over the girl's marble face, and she could only find strength to utter:

"I cannot thank you as I ought—my joy is too deep for words!"

"Noble lady," replied the forester, "I would spill the last drop of blood in my veins in your behalf, and all night I have been searching the woods."

"And how, prithee, did you know I was lost?"

"I witnessed the meeting at the Well, and overheard the conversation of the hunters at your non-appearance. Queen Margaret declared you and Lord Pelham had left her some time previously, and then there was considerable jesting about lovers' slow pace, and various matters, which mayhap, you understand better than I."

Again the girl blushed and her companion went on:

"Finally Pelham rode into the glade alone, and his majesty questioned him with regard to you, but not till your riderless palfrey sent a thrill of alarm through every heart and the king called upon him to explain did he acknowledge the truth."

"He did acknowledge it, then?" said the girl, feebly.

"Yes; he confessed that you had rejected his love, and he had become indignant at your refusal as to leave you unprotected in the forest. I immediately joined the group and offered my services to Henry, promising to find you, living or dead, if you were in Windsor Forest. Lord Pelham and two gentlemen belonging to his majesty's retinue have been scouring the woods in different directions, but have given up the task as hopeless and gone back to the castle. Lady, it has been my pride and pleasure to find you, but I would have given much could I have saved you from the miseries and perils of a night in the wilderness! What you suffered may be better imagined than described."

"Yes, yes; I shall never forget it, sir forester, as long as I remember anything! Be assured I do not envy you the companionship you have here, nor such bitter train of thought as sweeps over me while I lay wakeful and restless, yearning for the dawn to break that I might resume my toilsome march."

"Your face tells a strange story, and could he gaze upon you now I am certain Lord Pelham could not forgive himself for having exposed you to such dangers and such weariness."

The girl's countenance grew grave and thoughtful, almost stern, as she exclaimed:

"Heretofore I have thought him a gentleman, but now I am undecided. I would not risk my life's happiness with such a character like his."

There was a brief silence and then the girl resumed:

"My poor father must be wild with anxiety, for I am his all. I must not keep him waiting, but hasten home as fast as possible."

"Lady, you are by no means able to continue your journey," said the forester. "Your head and hands are sadly reared."

"Ay, I have truly trod a path of thorns," rejoined the girl, with a smile which gave her face something of the archness it had worn the previous morning. "It was weary work forcing my way through the briary shrubs with which the woods abound," and she extended her hands, crimsoned here and there with tiny streams of blood.

The forester clasped them with respectful courtesy, plucked a few leaves from a healing plant that grew near, and bound them over the wounds with the girl's lace kerchief. Then he looked up at her and said:

"Methinks you must be suffering much from your head, for it is sorely gashed. If you will glance in a pool hard by you can see for yourself."

Valentinia started, and cast an earnest look into the crystal mirror he had pointed out to her and shivered with sudden faintness as she faltered:

"Thus far I have had no time to think of these injuries, but my head must have struck a stone when I swooned and fell from my saddle."

"When and where, dear lady?"

"Just after Lord Pelham left me well nigh stunned by his parting words."

"And what were they—may I presume to ask?"

"That I had slighted his love and wounded his pride, and, he added, 'if my love is ever transformed into hate, woe be to you Valentinia Lyndhurst!'"

The forester seemed deeply moved, and his broad chest heaved when he exclaimed:

"A most unpardonable threat. I do not wonder at your swoon; but not to terrify your father, let me bind up your wounded head."

The girl bent toward the forester, and taking off the red sash which girded the gray tunic at the waist, he wound it about her brow, murmuring:

"I am but a sorry surgeon for so fair and delicately reared a lady as you."

The girl's eyes drooped as she rejoined:

"You seem as gentle as a woman, sir forester, and as bold and brave as Omar de Lion, and such characters are few."

The forester smiled, a smile which gave a new beauty to his fine face, but as he was silent the lady once more proceeded to express her gratitude and request that he would guide her home.

The forester lifted a hunter's horn and blew a shrill blast, at which summons a boy appeared leading two horses.

"This lad has been the companion of my school," observed the stranger; "sometimes we have ridden and sometimes walked, as best suited our purposes. An hour ago I stationed him at a short distance, telling him that when I needed him I would give a blast of the hunter's horn I always carry."

"You deserve my thanks," exclaimed Valentinia, glancing at the boy; "you seem shy and ill at ease in a lady's presence."

"He is a timid lad," said the forester, apologetically, "and more accustomed to the society of wild birds, deer, and woodmen than ladies, and does not know how to bear himself toward Margaret of Anjou's maids of honour."

"I would far rather find him thus than as bold and flippant as many of the pages at court, who think more of their gorgeous livery and curled and perfumed hair than filling their heads with useful knowledge," and the beautiful speaker laid her hands softly on the boy's shoulder, and tried to obtain a better view of his half-averted face.

"Lady Valentinia," exclaimed the young man, "will you now mount the palfrey I have provided?" as he spoke he gracefully bent to assist her, and, placing her dainty foot in his extended hand, the girl soon found herself in the saddle.

"I will not leave you till you are safe in the courtyard at Windsor Castle," said the forester, and, mounting his own steed, he rode on by her side.

A light breeze stirred through the greenwood, birds once more sang their matin hymns, and the deer began to return to the haunts from which the chase had startled them, drinking from rocky brooks or still pools, and guiding the unwary feet of the young fawns where the most delicate herbage grew.

The ride through the forest was not in the least tedious to Lady Valentinia, weary as she was, for the forester proved a most entertaining companion.

It was evident he had acquisitions beyond his position in life, and was not only well versed in English history but in that of Greece and Rome. Listening to him, Valentinia Lyndhurst forgot that he wore a forester's garb, and involuntarily yielded to the charm of his society, admiring his well-poised and cultivated mind, his clear judgment, and his keen wit.

At length the dim old woods were left far behind, and they journeyed onward through the pleasant open country, which had never appeared so fair to the girl; England's sky had never seemed half so

blue and cloudless, nor the sunshine so glorious, nor the lark's song so sweet, as she warbled like a rejoicing peri at the very gate of Heaven.

Suddenly the forester started, and exclaimed: "See, see, lady, there are some knights riding to meet us!"

"The foremost of them is my father," replied the girl, leaning forward and gazing in the direction indicated by her deliverer.

"Poor old gentleman," cried the forester; "what a night he must have passed!"

"Ay, my heart has been full of him during my lonely vigils in the wilderness. If he were able, I knew he would mount and ride to my rescue, but he is in delicate health, and I had not thought him able to mount his steed—much more to ride thus far."

"Love can bear great burdens, make great sacrifices, Lady Valentinia," observed her companion, speaking with a significance of which she was afterwards reminded in language that thrilled ever pulse of her being.

There was no occasion for a reply, as they were now interrupted by her father's well known voice shouting:

"Ho, there, good forester, bring you any tidings of Lady Valentinia Lyndhurst?"

And the old man strained his gaze through the cloud of dust, which concealed the girl from his sight.

"Yes, yes," was the response which came back to his yearning ear; "a few moments more and she will be in your arms."

"Not dead, I hope."

"Nay, may Heaven forbid; she is able to tell her own story too, my lord, and is not suffering save from fatigue and some slight wounds."

The next moment the Earl of Beaufort reined in his charger, which had borne him on many a battle, field during the reign of Henry IV. besides Lady Valentinia's palfrey, exclaiming:

"Found, found, my child, my hope, my only treasure! the blessed Madonna and all the saints be praised!"

With these words he wound his arms convulsively around the girl, her head sank upon his breast, his lips trembled on her brow and cheek, and the waves of her chestnut hair and both were speechless with joy.

Finally, however, the earl said:

"All night have I been in a high fever; the court doctor was called and administered sleeping potions, but I could not rest; I told them it was madness to think of repose when you were lost and exposed to the perils of yonder forest. Valentinia, you have been delicately reared; the wind has not been allowed to visit you roughly—how fared it with you alone in the wilderness, with only the bare possibility of meeting the forester stationed to protect the king's game?"

"Dear, dear father, it seems as if I had lived an age since I left you yestern-morn," rejoined the girl, gravely; "they have, I daresay, told you of Pelham's proposal and subsequent conduct?"

"Yes, child; it was hard to believe it of Richard Pelham, but he has been at my feet since, begging my forgiveness."

"Did you grant it, my father?"

"No; I am not generous enough to forgive the great wrong he has done our house; but do not let us dwell on that, I am anxious to learn what befell you in the forest."

The young girl then related the incidents that had transpired after Pelham had left her in the wood path, her fall from her palfrey, the flight of the animal while she lay senseless, her weary walk through the wood, her utter sense of desolation when night closed in and she found escape impossible, and how slowly the hours dragged by when in her leafy cover she had watched for the dawn.

"When the morning broke," she faltered, "I resumed my journey, but I was faint and sick at heart, and was sinking to the ground once more, declaring I should die there alone, when this forester came to my relief. He told me he had witnessed the scene at the Hunter's Well, when the party felt anxious concerning my fate, and promised the king to find me living or dead, if I were to be found in Windsor forest."

"What do I owe him?" said the baron. "What is his name, that I may ever after hold in grateful remembrance, and reward him as he deserves?"

"Indeed, I cannot tell you, for I have not asked the question."

The baron called the forester to his side, with a kind inquiry why he had not addressed him, in answer to which the young man alluded to his position.

"By my faith, young man," resumed Beaufort, "you are to-day on an equal footing with me. Ride at my daughter's bride-rein, and do not take a menial's place when I owe her life to you."

The forester obeyed, but the faint glow which deepened into crimson on Valentinia's cheek told that his companionship was not unwelcome, even to a brilliant and admired maid of honour.

At length they struck into the noble park which sweeps around Windsor Castle like fairy-land, and after a brisk gallop reined in their horses in the courtyard described in our first chapter.

Eager faces appeared at the quaint windows; white kerchiefs fluttered from fair hands, and cavaliers were grouped here and there awaiting the arrival of the travellers, who had been espied from the highest watch-tower.

"Rejoice with me," cried the Earl of Beaufort, waving his hat round and round his gray head in triumph, "the lost is found!"

"This is indeed good tidings," was the response of the lord chamberlain, as he hastened down the castle steps; "welcome, welcome back, Lady Valentinia."

The young cavaliers pressed forward to utter their greetings and congratulations, and while the ceremony was going on the old earl said:

"To you, brave forester, I owe my child. It is Robert Markham who restored her to me, and were I a king I would knight him for the deed."

"I do not wonder at your gratitude," replied the lord chamberlain. "Prithoe, when did you find her, young man?"

"Not till this morning, my lord; she passed the night in the wood."

"Poor lady," murmured his lordship; "her face shows how much she must have endured in the lonely forest of Windsor. Some of our cavaliers sought for her till late into the night."

"And who?" interrupted Lady Valentinia.

"Gerald Archer and Jasper de Vere," exclaimed two standing near.

They continued to whisper.

"We envy you till forester the happiness of finding you, but we must not detain you when you must be faint and weary. Go in."

As they spoke they surged back on either side, and through the phalanx they formed Valentinia Lyndhurst passed into the castle, leaning on her father's arm and followed by the forester. On entering a little audience chamber where the king and queen were waiting away the hours which must intervene before dinner, Henry VI. held out his hand and said:

"Sir forester, you have kept your word and restored a lost daughter to her father and a bright jewel to our court. Grief and care are swallowed up in joy, and it is well we should manifest our delight. Hol there, idle pages; fly to the tower and bid them ring the castle bell, ring the escutcheon of Beaufort to the breeze, and kindle bonfires on the hills, while our royal lady thanks Robert Markham for bringing back her lost maid of honour!"

All was now a pleasant stir within and around the castle; the bell sent forth its merriest peals; the Beaufort colours floated in the wind, and fires glowed red and warm from the picturesque height on which the royal residence stood.

Meanwhile Robert Markham found himself indeed a hero; the king and queen were loud in their praises; the courtiers came flocking in to congratulate him, and the Earl of Beaufort regarded him with grateful interest. Henry VI. even condescended to invite him to the state dinner, which was to be given that day; but though the old earl seconded the invitation the young man steadily declined. When he at length took his leave the nobleman followed him into the vestibule and out upon the terrace, exclaiming:

"Friend, you are far above your present position and deserve to be promoted! If I were to speak the word I could obtain you a commission in the royal army, and eventually make you one of the king's guard."

A sudden glitter shot into the forester's eyes, and he replied:

"For the present I prefer to be plain Robert Markham and protect his majesty's game."

"Strange, strange!" muttered the earl, and the next moment he was gone.

(To be continued.)

#### WIVES AND HOUSEWIVES.

If young men whose incomes are under one hundred pounds a year were bound over not to marry any one who had not earned a diploma in domestic management and elementary physiology a race might be produced by a process of artificial selection who would be able and willing to do all that is required of them. This new race could not marry before five-and-twenty, for, having to learn so many things, they would have to continue their education much longer than at present. This would, however, have the advantage of giving their constitutions time to harden. But love, that unfortunate

disturber of the best-laid schemes, steps in and men marry pretty little nonentities without diplomas for the foolish reason that they like them. They must be prepared to take the consequences and must not expect the pleasant girl they met at a ball to turn into the housewife of the Proverbs, with the accomplishments thrown in.

In households where there are grown-up spinsters it is most desirable that they should help in the work of the house. They should spare no pains to add to the comfort and elegancies of their home. They ought to learn cooking and nursing, plain sewing and everything that is useful. On the other hand, it can scarcely in reason be expected that a young married woman with children and with only the assistance of a raw girl should cook for hours every day, dust her room, nurse her babies, keep up her accomplishments and retain her hold on society and her husband. Perhaps a little wholesome simplicity and war to the knife with Mrs. Grundy might do more for the happiness of young couples with limited means than an attempt on the part of the wives to do the work of three servants and to keep up an appearance of having nothing to do but amuse themselves.

A. A.

#### PUNCTUALITY.

It is astonishing how many people there are who neglect punctuality. Thousands have failed from this cause alone. It is not only a serious vice in itself, but is the fruitful parent of numerous other vices, so that he who becomes the victim of it gets involved in toils from which it is almost impossible to escape. It makes the merchant wasteful of his time; it saps the business reputation of the lawyer, and it injures the prospects of the mechanic, who might otherwise rise to fortune; in a word, there is not a profession, nor a station in life, which is not liable to the canker of the destructive habit.

It is a fact not always remembered, that Napoleon's great victories were won by infusing into his subordinates the necessity of punctuality to the minute. It was his plan to manoeuvre over large spaces of country so as to render the enemy uncertain where he was about to strike a blow, and then suddenly to concentrate his forces and fall with irresistible power on some weak point of the extended lines of the foe.

The execution of this system demanded that each division of the army should arrive at the specified time punctually; for if any part failed to come up the battle was lost. It was by imitating this plan that the allies finally succeeded in overthrowing the emperor. The whole Waterloo campaign turned on these tactics. At Mont St. Jean Blücher was punctual, while Grouchy was not; and the result was that Napoleon fell and Wellington triumphed.

In mercantile affairs punctuality is as important as in military. Many are the instances in which the neglect to renew an insurance punctually has suddenly led to serious loss. With sound policy do the banks insist, under the penalty of a protest, on the punctual payment of notes, for were they to do otherwise commercial transactions would fall into insupportable confusion. Many and many a time has the failure of one man to meet his obligations brought on the ruin of a score of others, just as the toppling down, in a line of bricks, of the master brick, causes the fall of all the rest. Thousands remain poor all their lives, who, if they were more faithful in their word would secure a large run of custom and so make their fortunes. Be punctual, if you would succeed.

We have heard many women complain of their husbands' neglect of home. A spoonful of honey will keep more bees in the hive than will tea of vinegar.

**ARMENIAN BUTTER.**—Talking of blighted Armenians, a returned missionary makes the interesting statement that the butter is carried there in goat skins, with the hair on the inside, and that when the missionaries want to use it they have to comb it. One need not faint at the sight of an occasional hair in the butter dish after that.

**SECRETS OF LOVE.**—One of the great secrets of conjugal felicity is a resolution to bear with each other's failures, and throw the veil of affection around them and conceal them. Then you must learn to cultivate good-natured forbearance, which is the best method of lessening a present evil and ensuring mutual correction. The imperfections of human character constitute the strongest claims on love. All the world approves the good that we exhibit, and if husband and wife only estimate that in each, which all are constrained to value, what do they more than others? It is infirmities of character, imperfections of nature, that call for the pitying sympathy, the tender compassion that makes each the comforter, the monitor of the other.



[THE RETREAT OF THE ENEMY.]

# OLD RUFFORD'S MONEY; OR, WON WITHOUT MERIT, LOST WITHOUT DESERVING.

BY THE AUTHOR OF  
"Fighting for Freedom," etc., etc.

## CHAPTER XXXIX.

Knavery's plain face is never seen. *Shakespeare.*

"Oh, my dear Mrs. Colonel Macgregor, I hardly know how to break the dreadful news, and yet I suppose it will fall to me to do it. It's so shocking that I thought poor, dear Cecilia would have sunk under it; yet I'm told, though I hardly believe it—for she can't be ignorant of what all the world knows—that she was only last evening teaching at the choir singing class as if nothing more than usual had happened. Some people have strange ways. Mrs. Green tells me that her daughter was there, and that Squire Frankland came down to the schools with her—Miss Chesterton—and sat there all the while, and talked to the vicar—of course in a whisper, so as not to interfere with the singing. And then when Mrs. Stokes was a-going to say something to Miss Cecilia that great, burly squire pushes himself in between, and stops her, and takes Miss Chesterton's arm, and then Dr. Sherlock himself puts on her shawl, and she thanks him and hurries off, looking quite pleased, and the vicar says how good it was of her to come down, and her father so very ill. What do you think of that behaviour for people whose brothers are in Newgate for forgery, and, as I hear from Mrs. Stokes, very likely to be hanged?"

The speaker was our amiable friend, Mrs. Chatterley; her auditors, Mrs. Colonel Macgregor, Mrs. Doctor Halliwell, Mrs. Abernethy Ashton, and the still single Helena Macgregor.

"I am not sufficiently acquainted with the circumstances, my dear Mrs. Chatterley, to form a decided opinion of how far it may be proper to show we are aware of the disgrace that has fallen upon a member of her family. It is a very difficult and delicate question. It appears that young Mr. Chesterton has fallen into bad company and evil courses, and they say has committed a forgery on the bank in which he is employed to the amount of several thousands of pounds. But as the disgrace of such an offence does not attach to the sister of such a person I think that we may call upon her and offer her our condolence

and sympathy, more especially as I understand that Sir Robert Perceval and Captain Sherlock have both of them been to the Cedars several times in the last two days."

"Captain Sherlock left Smethwick station yesterday evening, and the postmistress says he's gone to Paris; where she believes Mr. Reginald was taken, and brought back to Newgate. How he, as a young officer, can mix himself up in such a business I can't think. It may damage his future promotion; at any rate it can't do him any good."

"I'm told that he said he'd prove young Mr. Chesterton innocent before he came back to Broadmoor," said Mrs. Doctor Halliwell.

"That's perhaps easier said than done," observed Mrs. Chatterley. "The officer has got the order in his own handwriting by which the robbery was done; and there's a number of other forgeries of people's names, and false entries in the books for many thousands of pounds, as well as the robbery, against him."

"Mamma," said Mrs. Abernethy Ashton, after a pause, "I think it is our duty to call on Miss Chesterton, and offer her our consolation and sympathy. We can all go together in the carriage. You shall inquire specially after old Mr. Chesterton, and see him, and meanwhile we will obtain an interview with Cecilia. It is no less than we ought to do under these painful circumstances to show that we do not include the family in this imprudent young man's criminality."

Mrs. Halliwell and Helena assented, the former observing:

"Yes; and if it should so happen that the young man should get off, or be acquitted, it will be a claim upon those very distant and reserved people to show them we didn't turn our backs upon their troubles."

"If we are to go in a carriage it must not be direct from here," said Mrs. Doctor Halliwell; "it will not look well. You shall all of you" (Mrs. Chatterley was entirely ignored on such occasions) "come over to Halliwell House, and thence we will take my husband's brougham; it seats four comfortably."

Though the last assertion was, as the speaker and her auditors all knew, the reverse of fact, no dissenting voice was heard on this occasion, for neither of the three would have foregone this delightful little bit of retaliation for slights they conceived had been put upon them by the Chestertons, whom they envied and hated.

These supposed slights had no other origin than

Ralph Chesterton's studious habits and dislike for inane gossip, and Cecilia's retiring disposition and earnest nature, which found full employment in doing acts of kindness for the poor and dependent, in domestic duties, and in the companionship of Amina Perceval—the last a deadly offence against the social importance of the Macgregors, as the young lady's marked preference for Cecilia threw them into the cold shade, as regarded the favour of the great family at the Grange.

Mrs. Colonel Macgregor donned her grandest visiting suit of black velvet, trimmed with broad gray Astrachan fur, her Caroline hat with its imposing tuft of hearse-like feathers, and, as she intended to be pathetic, her broad black reticule, glittering with cut-steel beads and ornaments, contained a duplicate mouchoir, one of a dozen of the finest Eastern fabric, embroidered with Indian gold flanges in its corners, which made it the admiration of Mrs. Chatterley, and the gossip of Broadmoor, who had been each more than a dozen times made acquainted with the fact that the deceased Begum of Bandycoot's effects having been distributed as prizes among the captors of her husband's chief pottah, or fort, the late Colonel Macgregor presented these costly (and useless) relics of oriental splendour to the lady who now exhibited them.

For the rest, they were about as fitted for ordinary application either to the weeping eye or the irritated nose as a piece of horse-hair shirt or a pair of snuffers.

There lurked also in the recesses of the bag more than one gold, silver, and glass box, vial, and perfume bottle, with perfumes, stimulating salts and pungent restoratives, fitted to prevent the overpowering effects on the nerves, simulated or really felt, by females in affecting crises, or to restore their real or pretended loss of consciousness under any distressing emergency.

Thus armed and accoutred, Mrs. Colonel Macgregor was prepared for every contingency, and her three daughters being all similarly provided with Preston salts, sal volatile, etc., the quartette at the hour of two left the Sanitarium, and after a short drive through Broadmoor and its immediate environs, to the great edification of the humbler gossips and country people drew up at the front door of the Cedars, Nathaniel Stubbs, Doctor Halliwell's gardener, coachman and factotum, being got up for the occasion under Mrs. H.'s own special superintendence in such a style as made him feel himself the envy and admiration of the surrounding rustics.

As the carriage whirled and grated round the gravel drive, Nathaniel contriving not only to get the best pace and extra frisk and whisk of the tail out of the old gray mare by an insidious but severe flick under its flank, Bushby Frankland, startled by the unwonted clatter, stopped to the window of the bedroom, wherein, subbed in an easy-chair, sat Ralph Chesterton with his daughter beside him.

The doctor from the Grange, sent for by Sir Robert, had half an hour previously visited his patient. He had at once made a correct diagnosis, and saw that strong nervous excitement had overthrown the balance of a firm and ordinarily impetuous temper. He had therefore prescribed a somewhat powerful sedative and soporific and after acquiring perfect quietude, the avoidance of all disturbing topics, in fact, nothing beyond agreeable converse and complete rest, and taking his departure, not without warning Cecilia that her father's condition was such that there was not any ground for apprehension of worse than a few days' confinement to his chamber to restore the nervous equilibrium.

It was at this juncture that the entrance of the Macgregors came down the stairs of their Red Roy ancestors upon the daughter's dwelling in the peaceful Lowlands of the Caledonians.

"Hey! what?" exclaimed the squire, in surprise, as he watched the four immense females in grand array descend successively from the carriage, and tax the utmost physical strength of Nathaniel's right arm as he assisted each of them to alight.

During this process Bushby seemed much amused and hummed the old tune of "the Campbells are coming" with great glee.

"Any more of ye?" said he, when Helen came down the step. "Well, I've been puzzled long ago with an egg in a doctor's pill, but this beats the egg-trick hollow! Clearly clear, just look here at this pill-box" (for he then named the pill-box, round-fronted brougham of Doctor Halliwell), "just look here, and do tell me how they pulled Mrs. Colonel Macgregor and her three large daughters inside that little conveyance?"

"Mrs. Colonel Macgregor?" said Cecilia, stepping to the window; "and her daughters! Yes; here they are. They have come to inquire after my father's health. I must see them, I suppose." And Cecilia was about to apply her hand to the bell-rope which hung by her father's chair.

Ralph Chesterton raised his hand. "Nay, my dear child; not so fast. I would not have you leave me at the present moment for any visitors. I have my reasons for it, and most assuredly these people, who have merely come to gratify their curiosity, will not intrude themselves upon me."

"What do they mean by that?" said Bushby Frankland, who still stood near to the window; "one would think they were asked to dinner! Why the she-dragon has sent away her chariot! Cecilia dear, don't go down to them. I'll see them, and tell them—"

"Nay, cousin, we shall learn something more when the servant comes up," said Ralph, smiling. "You're so precipitate."

The squire laughed. "Oh you don't know what those campaigning ladies dare do, Cousin Ralph. I've met with some of them in my time and they'll come and breakfast, dine, and sup with you without asking at all. Don't flatter yourself they'll not intrude on your privacy. They'll bounce in upon you with no other apology than their anxiety, as they call it, about your precious health; and if once they get in, as they've sent away their carriage, you're in for an hour of it at least. Let me see them; I'll get rid of them in half that time."

Cecilia Chesterton could not help laughing at her cousin's brusque good nature.

"Bushby," said she, "remember the carriage that brought Mrs. Macgregor and her daughters is Dr. Halliwell's visiting carriage; and again that the ladies are scarcely two minutes' walk from their home; there is therefore no need for surprise at their ordering the return of the brougham."

"True, my clever little pet," replied Bushby, laughingly; "and, what's better, my good-natured little Cissy. You always think of everything that's kind. But you shan't see 'em, for all that. I'll not have you taken away from your sick father, and so I'll tell 'em; no, not for fifty Macgregors instead of four of 'em."

The servant here entered, bearing three cards: "Mrs. Colonel and Miss Macgregor." "Mrs. John Halliwell, M.D." Ralph laughed and Cecilia smiled as the squire read aloud the names in a pompous tone—"Mrs. Abernethy Ashton, M.R.C.S.E."

"Gad!" said Bushby, "what an alarming array of professionals." Then turning to the servant he said, "Mr. Frankland's compliments and he will attend the ladies immediately."

The servant retired.

"Mr. Frankland's compliments!" exclaimed Mrs. Colonel Macgregor, in surprise. "Is your master so very unwell? Did you say when you delivered my card that Mrs. Colonel Macgregor had desired you to say that she was very anxious about Mr. Chesterton's health since his late serious attack?"

"No I didn't," said the rustic servant; "as soon as I thought the cards would tell 'em who'd come, as I ain't good, you see, ma'am, at such long messages."

"That'll do," said Mrs. Macgregor, politely, "that will do," and the man retired.

"Did you ever hear the like?" Mr. Frankland's compliments, and we have come to visit the Chestertons. Well, my dears, I am afraid we shall not see either father or daughter if we don't make a bold attempt."

Mrs. Macgregor rang the bell.

"John, will you present our compliments to Miss Chesterton and say that Mrs. Halliwell, Mrs. Ashton and Miss Macgregor will be happy to see her for a few seconds—"

"Ha! Mrs. Macgregor! My lady dear Mrs. Halliwell and how's she do?" Haven't seen him for a month. And how's Mr. Ashton? I couldn't ask Mrs. Ashton is it, I mean, she's ill and she's well. And Miss Salina, too—"

"Salina," interposed Mrs. Macgregor, whose wrath and disappointment were increasing her chatter into rivalry of the red tip of her nasal promontory.

"Beg ten thousand pardons, I mean, Miss Salina." Mrs. Macgregor was nearly interrupting him a second time, but she went on: "Salina, see, ladies, you take me at a disadvantage. My cousin, Mr. Chesterton, has just been visited by Sir Robert Paterson's physician, and he has ordered him absolute rest and quietness. He's to see to one but his own family; and as the doctor's orders are imperative you will perceive, my dear Mrs. Macgregor, that I cannot take upon myself the responsibility of violating them."

"Oh, I'm sure," Mrs. Bushby, "I'll be the last person to even consider of doing the rules, whatever my personal anxiety may be for the health of my dear friend, Mr. Chesterton. But his daughter and my daughters do not come within the scope of the doctor's prohibition?"

Bushby saw the danger and met it promptly. "If Miss Chesterton," said he, "had consulted only her own kind feelings, she would have been the first to grant you. But her father arrested her steps, and she dare not leave him an instant. Is there any message, young ladies, any communication for Miss Cecilia, that I can deliver, or be made the medium of conveying to her? You may command me."

The whole of their pretty scheme of condolence and pretended sympathy had utterly collapsed.

The squire had triumphed by mere straightforward refusal to understand the situation.

Mrs. Macgregor changed her technique; she made an attack in flank.

"I fear that the heavy blow of his son's misconduct," my dear Mr. Frankland, must have seriously affected so proud and sensitive a nature as that of his excellent parent. Oh, Mr. Frankland, what a dreadful thing it is for an honourable parent and a pure-minded sister to find that she is being in whom they had centred their hopes had betrayed—"

"Very lively, madam, very lively," interrupted Bushby Frankland; "but it is just because I thought you'd talk about this painful subject that I decided you should not see Mr. Ralph and his daughter."

"I'm sure, Mr. Frankland"—she thus epigrammatically retaliated for Bushby's gaucherie in the matter of names—"I'm sure, Mr. Frankland, I'd no idea of speaking of Mr. Reginald's offences to his father. It's to you, as the family friend, I address myself, as I naturally feel anxious in such a case to know the truth, and—"

"Then, madam, you must inquire elsewhere. Take my word for it, madam, the young man is innocent, and I, Bushby Frankland, say so. Therefore, we will waive the subject, and when the trial of my dear friend and cousin is over, and Reginald is rehabilitated, I shall be happy to meet you all to commemorate the event. Till then, ladies—I am plain and candid, you see—I have to request you will not seek converse with my plighted bride, Miss Cecilia Chesterton, nor in any way allude, should any fortuitous circumstance throw her into your company, to the guilt or innocence of her brother Reginald. With these sentiments, allow me to make the apologies of both father and daughter for declining a personal interview. Shall the servant call your carriage?"

"Certainly not, Mr. Frankland. Oh, no, we'll not give you the trouble. We're such near neighbours, Mr. Frankland—only a stone's throw off. Good day, Mr. Bushby, good day. Come, ladies!"

And Mrs. Colonel Macgregor, boiling with indignation and disappointed curiosity, sailed into the passage and out of the hall door, Bushby Frankland

bowing her out with exaggerated politeness, and finally hurrying back into the house, where he fell into the nearest chair choking with laughter, nor did he recover his seriousness until he had detailed the whole scene to Ralph and his daughter, whose amusement, though more subdued, was nearly akin to his own.

As to Mrs. Colonel Macgregor, she held her peace till the door of the reception-parlour of Clonapine Villa was closed behind the baffled quartette.

"Was there ever a more boorish, insolent, uncultivated bear than that fox-hunting squire who says he's to marry Cecilia? Why, my dear girls, such a fellow would have been horsewhipped by my dear Macgregor if he'd dared to insult a lady of his acquaintance in this gross manner! If it had been his wife he'd treated so he'd have called him out and shot him. It's true, in spite of what he says, that young Chesterton will be married or transported, and then who'll associate with a woman's family, I'd like to know? You'll see girls goes before a fall, and they'll have to leave Broadmoor and hide themselves where nobody knows they're a brother and a sister who's been convicted of a capital felony. Won't you see till Reginald's acquitted! Very likely not. That some, girls, will go over to your place, Victoria—I mean Mrs. Halliwell—to see, and then we'll ask the doctor's advice as to how we shall behave towards these Chesterton people."

So saying the three lady-colours went a-revelling in double quick to her dressing-room, where, having disrobed herself of the astrachan-trimmed costume, she donned the plumed Caroline and readjusted her wig, and deposited the Begonia's handkerchief in a jewel-case, the parti carrée bank themselves to see and attend at the Sanatorium.

## CHAPTER XL.

Reginald Chesterton and his trustful friend, William Sherlock, met early the next forenoon at the Great Bings.

Young Sherlock had shot Billie for the wound on his arm, which he had suffered on a booby hunt, and he sat down slightly and shivered painfully throughout the night. This, with mental excitement, caused by the occurrence of the day, the physical struggle and anxiety for his friend's deliverance from his unhappy dilemma, denied him the refreshment of "first nature's sweet restorer, balmy sleep." He tossed and turned uneasily, counted the chiming and tolling of the numerous churches as they marked the slow and weary flight of the long hours of darkness, and at the first streak of dawn sought the warm baths of the excellent establishment, Hotel d'Angleterre in the immediate proximity of his own hotel, that of St. Antoine, in La Place Verta.

Much relieved by the restorative effects of a medicated bath, refreshed by a brief repose in the salon, cheered by a cup of real froths, and comforted by the bubble-bubble of a margill of the finest Persian tobacco, William Sherlock returned, after two hours agreeably consumed, dressed himself, and before eleven was in conference with Reginald.

As to young Chesterton, he was a changed being. The elasticity of youth's strong constitution, comparatively early hours and, above all, the dreary and apparently endless maze of misery in which he had been almost hopelessly wandering changed suddenly into a broad, clear path leading towards home and happiness, had completely regenerated him.

The hearty and beaming cheerfulness with which he welcomed his friend rewarded him so amply that they entered on the discussion of his future plans with a hopefulness quite disproportionate to the amount of success which an experienced man of the world, still less a detective of Mr. Lynde's stamp, would have attributed to the mere discovery of one of the stolen notes.

"Now then for a rummage of Mr. S—'s depository for stolen goods," said William Sherlock. "I'll see my father's old friend Twiss within an hour, and get an authority for a domiciliary visit, as they call it here."

"Let us ask our host's advice about the mode of proceeding. He's an honest fellow and knows all about the best way of attaining our object. I'll ask him in. He'll advise us for the best, I know."

"Very good; but in most continental countries neither the police, the law, nor the government have any of the punctilious regard for the inviolability of a man's house, the liberty of his person, or the sacredness even of his most private papers or correspondence, which fences round the subject of a constitutional state. They seek evidence, or anything else they want, in the most direct and unscrupulous manner."

"Exactly so, my friend, but I fear this setting in motion the police machinery is most frequently with a political object, and that in the matter of justice to the individual, or an enforcement of the rights of pro-

erty, you will find the boasted activity of the police proportionally sluggish and inert. However, I will call in Binge, as I proposed."

Reginald left the apartment, and shortly returned with his shrewd and obliging host, who listened with attention to the plan of William Sherlock for a search of the premises of S—, the money-changer.

"I assure you, my estimable young countryman, that if I thought there was a chance of such a plan being successfully carried out I would further your exertions by my very best help; but there is not. We have here—I speak it in confidence—a very flimsy and pretentious imitation of English constitutional and personal liberty, ostentatiously paraded when the occasion suits, which will prove to be rather an obstruction than otherwise to the obtaining authority for the domiciliary visit you truly mention as of such everyday occurrence in France, Spain, and Germany. My guest is right; it is most frequently, if not always, for a political or governmental purpose that what we in England effect by a search-warrant is carried out. Here, no such preliminary as a warrant is thought of; nothing is accorded to a policeman, i. e., to a government employe of the higher rank."

"I see," said William Sherlock. "Then you are of opinion that I could not obtain an authorisation to search for the stolen property, upon my showing good reason to suppose it concealed in a certain place?"

"There are several objections why you would not. First, the robbed persons are not naturalized subjects of this realm; secondly, the robbery was not committed within this territory; and if these two barriers were not enough, the police are the only judges of the advisability of such a search, while the sympathy of the many leans strongly to the protection and harbouring of those who, having violated the law in England, fly to this country to spend their ill-gotten gains in a country of refuge. You may rest satisfied that Mr. S— is safe from your search, and that it is only by seeking nearer home for traces of the criminal that you have a chance of the assistance of the authorities."

As the shrewd old gentleman thus explained the position of affairs William Sherlock saw his prettily contrived house of cards crumbling down to its very foundation. It was clear that nothing could be done in putting to the question so respectable shopkeeper, so creditable a personage, as Mr. S—, the money-changer of Antwerp, and of several other Netherlandish towns. The friends thanked their host for his valuable information, though it dashed one part of their scheme to the ground.

Sherlock's, however, was not the spirit to be baffled by difficulty, or disheartened by defeat. He challenged obstacles, and if resolution and perseverance could overcome them they were surmounted. Their adviser retired after a friendly schnapp, and an expression of his regret that their latest plan must end in failure and disappointment.

"Notwithstanding all this," said William Sherlock, bluntly, "I will see the consul, and at any rate possess him with all the circumstances of the case. His will is good towards me, and what his power may be he will at once inform me. I will return, Reginald, as soon as I have had my interview, and we will then consult as to our next step in the unravelling of the mystery of this conspiracy, in which I fear not I shall, sooner or later, succeed."

So saying he left Reginald Chatterton, in buoyant spirits, who at once sat down, and opening his writing-case drew forth the little manual of secret-writing with which Mr. Benjamin Bridoon had furnished him.

A cursory examination convinced Reginald that the scheme of cryptography, so much prized and praised by Mr. Bridoon, was a very poor, shallow, and limited affair. Indeed the poverty of its invention, and the transparent iteration of its meagre vocabulary, which was evidently the invention of some illiterate but ingenious horse-dealer—who had compiled it for the limited purpose of transmitting deceptive news of horse-buying transactions and with the object of misleading other parties than the one to whom the letter was originally addressed—occasioned him more than one hearty laugh at its comical and shallow knavery.

Need we say that it ludicrously broke down, under any attempt to convey by its means such information of his proceedings and prospects as Reginald desired to transmit to his well-meaning correspondent.

After amusing himself for a time with its thin devices for secret communication he returned it good-humouredly to his blotting-case.

"No, no, Benjamin Bridoon, I've no doubt you're good at a deal; a swap, or a bet; no one I know is better; but cryptography is a step beyond your last. But why should I fear to write in my own hand, my own doing, my own feelings, and my own intentions? My letter will doubtless go safe under the name of Richard Chillingham; that alias is the only cryo-

graph I used prattles; so now for a letter to Benjamin which I think will at any rate give him satisfaction in the reading, as it does me in the writing."

Reginald's letter, it may be easily supposed, detailed his pleasant journey and trajet to Belgium; his fortunate recognition of an old friend, a distinguished naval officer (he did not disclose his name); their discovery and possession of a twenty-pound note, one of those stolen in the robbery imputed to Reginald; and the escape of the scoundrel who uttered it at the hotel in Antwerp. He concluded by stating that he was still on the track of the property, and hoped soon to arrive at evidence which would connect Ephraim Petrot, alias Edward Bowman, with the robbery of the parcels; if he did not prove him to be the actual perpetrator. Having finished his letter, he paused a few moments after reading it over, when it occurred to him that he might well make one other concession to secrecy by writing the address on the envelope in a feigned hand.

This he did in a very feminine Italian character, and smiling it with a common French device from a trinket charm borrowed from mine host's niece, displaying a full fringed sunflower hanging its jolly round head to the left, with "Elle vous suit partout," it looked as unlike a letter containing anything more important than feminine secrets as could well be imagined.

William Sherlock could not help joining in a laugh over this precious billet-doux, and having himself written several letters to his father, to Amine, his betrothed—this was by far the longest—to his father-in-law in press, and to Cecilia, he placed them all, by permission, after the necessary preliminary of paying postage, in the consular letter-bag, by which their privacy until they had quitted Continental officials was thoroughly guaranteed.

William Sherlock's application to the obliging British consul was met by precisely the same objections, though in different terms, as those of their former adviser. He added that where the holders of the notes were persons of respectability the Bank of England must and did pay them on demand, according to its promise on their face.

This simple fact, which had not been thought of by William Sherlock, was shown to be necessary to secure the confidence of persons who might take them, as they are taken, as an almost cosmopolitan circulating medium. These and other considerations induced William Sherlock, and Reginald also, to conclude that the single note they had secured ended the immediate chance of further trace or recovery in the Netherlands and that the gallant young officer's further investigations were in some measure forestalled in the English metropolis by the professional search of Mr. Lynx, of Mr. Bridoon, of the bank authorities, and of the detective police in general.

We have already stated how this divergence from the contemplated visit to Paris of Captain Sherlock was brought about and as no further good purpose could be served by a longer stay in Antwerp, Reginald himself begged of his friend to carry out his original intention. For, though selfishness might prompt him to desire his further stay, he had done all and more than all that friendship demanded in the service he had rendered and the peril he had encountered.

Under these influences, and also a letter from home which informed him of the arrival in Paris of Sir Robert Percival, of Amine, and of the newly-married Pennington Percival, with his noble bride, the Lady Augusta, Captain Sherlock departed for the French capital, after a sincere promise that even in the gaieties of the pleasure-capital of Europe he would always have an eye to shortening the exile of his friend, Reginald Chatterton.

We will now take a glance at some other things connected with the nefarious plot of which the erring but not criminal heir to the honoured name of Chatterton was thus far the victim, and which resulted in that imprudent young man drinking the cup of retribution to the bitter dregs.

(To be continued.)

## IRENE BELLETIER. A TALE OF HUMBLE LIFE.

"I must leave you now, Irene."

"Well, ring again to-morrow-night, Emile."

"I will. Good-bye."

"Bye-bye."

With these words, whispered in a low undertone, they parted. They loved each other dearly, and their young, unclouded hearts were overflowing with fond hopes and bright anticipations.

Irene Belletier was a small, bright-eyed, dark-haired Italian girl. She had recently thrown her hap aside, and at the time of which I write she was, in the capacity of housemaid, living in the service of a French gardener about four miles south of the great city of Paris.

Emile Zulfat was a fair-haired, light-complexioned, blue-eyed Swiss boy, with a high forehead and slender form, and was about seventeen years of age at the time my story begins.

Emile was brought up in Switzerland. He had gazed upon the towering Alps, and nuzzled upon the clear lakes that reposed in their shadows. He had read many thrilling incidents and heroic achievements connected with the history of his romantic country. A spark of the sublime, as it were, had been infused into his soul, creating high hopes and deep yearnings for fame. While his years as yet were few, a mere peasant's life being too tame for his aspiring nature, he wandered away to France in order to attend the superior institutions of learning of that proud country.

But upon his arrival, being entirely without means, he was compelled to search for his situation and earn money to enable him to pursue his studies. He obtained employment of a dayman, who lived in the immediate neighbourhood of the gardener already mentioned.

Emile, being a handsome youth, as well as polite and good-natured, was placed in charge of the milk waggons to drive in and out of the city. Merrily he whistled along the broad roadway, morning after morning, long before the gray dawn appeared above the far-off hill tops and mountains in the east. His heart beat light and impatient at fair visions of laurels and riches and glories, awaiting him somewhere in the future, rose up before him with all their dreamy delusions, while from month to month his little bank account steadily grew. Before a great many months had passed, however, his heart beat lighter and faster, especially on Sunday mornings, because he knew this was the time Irene Belletier attended church in the city, and she invariably preferred to go with him in his humble cart.

Frequently she rode with him both to and from the city, and in a short time Emile felt happier somehow when she was by his side in his common cart than if he were in the most superb coach, without her, that swept round the wide drives in the great parks.

She too was delighted even at the whirring sound of the wheels of the cart, and the silvery tinkling-bell of his bell was the sweetest music to her heart she had ever heard, not excepting the soft, plaintive tones of the harp she had recently thrown aside.

For this was often, often the signal for her to steal unobserved from the house, by moonlight, along through the tall, green corn, under the thin shadow of the orchard trees, down to the roadside where Emile awaited her on his return home in the evening.

Many a time, upon hearing this silvery sound, had Irene stolen to his side with a footstep as light as that of a fairy and a heart still lighter, only to hear a few soft words from the lips of the noble boy who had so completely won her heart.

Dear! she prized every little gift, however simple or trifling, which Emile, as a sign of his devotion, presented her. And it was at the parting of these stolen interviews when Irene would often timidly say, "Ring again to-morrow night, Emile."

Ever long they had vowed eternal fidelity to each other, of course; and Emile Zulfat forgot his great love for his books and his dreams of ideal greatness, being wholly absorbed, as it were, in the passing beauty, love and trusting confidence of this little dark-haired Italian girl.

The whole of Emile's future had become identified with Irene, and not far ahead a modest cottage rose up in his imagination, with her as its sole mistress. And thus all moved smoothly along for a time; but there is "no day without a cloud, no sea without a wave."

One evening Emile stealthily gave the signal, as usual, but Irene did not appear.

"I wonder what has happened?" inquired Emile of himself, as he gave the second signal a little louder than the first.

He bent his head forward and listened anxiously for her light footstep, but heard nothing save the restless beating of his own heart.

He waited full half an hour for Irene to come, but was disappointed, and had reluctantly to drive on home and be questioned concerning his lateness by his employer.

Emile knew something was wrong, but could not imagine what it was.

The following morning, however, as he was passing the gardener's, as usual, on his way to the city, Irene suddenly made her appearance and told him all the trouble.

It was that the old gardener had also heard those tinkling-bell signals, and, noticing the brightening up of Irene's face, concluded to try and penetrate the mysterious connections between them.

Therefore he carefully secreted himself in the

orchard about the hour Emile usually came along, and he had but a short time to wait until the signal was given.

The next moment Irene, as he expected, came tripping along to the trust lightly and securely, as she thought, under the dark shadows of the orchard trees.

All was clear to the gardener now, and the guilt of the two young lovers was evident.

He stepped forth from his hiding-place, intercepted the little runaway, took her by the hand and led her back, telling her on the way that on the morrow she should leave his house and seek employment elsewhere.

Irene felt deeply injured at this abrupt dismissal from the gardener's service, for in her youth and innocence she was not aware that she was sinning. What harm could it be to meet her lover down by the roadside?

Yet she felt sorry that she had incurred the gardener's displeasure. It grieved her to have to leave his service, for he was generally kind to her. She knew no place to go. Sleep remained far away from her pillow that night for the first time in all her life.

Sometimes she almost resolved to await the next morning, acknowledge her error, and sue for her employer's forgiveness; but she had not erred, and her proud little heart, scorning submission, soon rebelled against such thoughts, and she wondered if Emile could do so something to avenge her outraged feelings.

She finally concluded to tell Emile all about it the next morning, consequently she had to rise very early, in order to see him as he passed on to the city.

Emile quickly comprehended, took her in the cart and whirled off at a rapid rate.

But they were now by no means so happy as they had been on previous occasions when they had gone into the city together.

Some sort of an ominous presentiment arose in their minds, occasioning much uneasiness and anxiety.

Before they had been in the city long, however, Emile succeeded in his efforts to secure a situation for his little dark-haired sweetheart, and when they parted they were again right cheerful and hopeful.

On account of her beauty and sweetness of disposition, Irene's new mistress, Mrs. Williams, an English lady who had come to remain only a few months in Paris to see the sights and fashions of the great metropolis, became very much attached to her and was always so kind that the young girl could not help liking her very much.

Mrs. Williams, after a short time, exercised great influence over the mind of Irene, and a few well-dressed gentlemen noticing her now and then, caused her heart for a time to wander from her Swiss lover. She was carried from one part of the city to another, until finally he lost sight of her altogether.

He drove the milk waggon a few months longer, but the charm was gone now, and his mind wandered back to his books and former dreams again.

He had been very saving, and his bank-account had grown at the present time to be a very desirable amount indeed. Having pretty well mastered the French language, having also in the meantime acquired the rudiments of the English, he drew forth his savings, bade farewell to all his associates, and turned his face towards England to finish his education and commence a profession or business for life.

## CHAPTER II.

"Oh, I wish I could find him!" said Irene, a few weeks after Emile had sailed, "I feel so lonely without him!"

So she wandered far out into the city in her search for him; but, of course, she was unsuccessful. At length she bethought herself of watching for the milk-cart as it came into the city.

Consequently she walked a mile out on the old, familiar roadway, confident now that she had hit upon a sure plan to meet her lover whom she had so wronged.

She longed to see him once more, and ask his forgiveness. Not one of those well-dressed gentlemen had a heart as true as Emile's.

She knew this now. Absence had taught her how she really loved him, and Mrs. Williams wished to take her away where she would never see him again. She did not desire to go, although she liked the good lady very much.

"No, no; she could not leave Emile. Yonder comes the cart!" she exclaimed, hurrying on a little faster, but, thinking of herself presently, she halted and waited its approach.

Her young heart beat joyfully at the sight of that familiar cart again, but as it drew near a very perceptible change came over her face, like a darkened dream.

There was a stranger in it, and not Emile. She had not once thought of this. Emile in her mind was identified with that cart, and she could scarcely realize that he was not therein. Yet it was true her darling was gone!

The cart approached, and she asked the driver in a tremulous tone where Emile was. He had only head of that name, and could not give her any definite information; but told her, however, that Emile had gone away, he knew not whither. The cart then passed on, and Irene was sadder now than ever.

She reproached herself for having been so unkind to Emile, when he had always been so good and true to her. And now, perhaps, she would never see him again!

She burst into tears. She felt she had lost the only one who loved her truly, and the only one of all others most dear to her heart; and to know it was her own fault was more than her feelings could bear.

It was not very consoling to think of the kindness of Mrs. Williams now. She loved Emile, and there could be no comparison of his love to that of others.

She slowly and sorrowfully wended her way back to the city, looking at every gentleman whom she chanced to meet, with a vain hope that it might be Emile.

Upon her arrival Mrs. Williams, seeing her low-spiritedness, attempted to cheer her up. She gave her a valise, and requested her to prepare to start with her on the morrow for England.

Irene was very loth to go, but she had lost her lover and knew not where to find him, and hating to parted with her kind mistress, she made up her mind to accompany her.

So she gathered up all the little presents Emile had given her, and carefully stored away each and everyone in her valise. They were doubly dear now that their giver was gone. They were like so many tender memories of him, and she wished to keep them for her sadder moments all through the unexplored future, wherever she went.

The morrow came. Mrs. Williams was now ready to return to her English home. Irene silently accompanied her.

Irene had been aboard ships before, and the novelty of sailing on the sea did not absorb her entire thoughts.

She longingly gazed upon receding France, and as the shore grew dim in the distance behind she felt that the only one she ever loved was lost to her now for ever.

She really wished she had remained, for she thought that she might possibly have found him had she sought for him longer.

But she was going to a country of which she had heard so much. The thoughts of the strange sights and scenes with which she would meet cheered her, and she began to look for the English shores.

After a few hours on the "wide, wide sea" the vessel arrived in port and they were transported by rail to Mrs. Williams's home.

With all things new and novel about her, Irene was most of the time right cheerful; but once in a while, as she gazed on the precious little keepsakes Emile gave her, love would rise up in her heart and wait her quick as thought back to France—to the old gardener's—to the orchard and to the roadside where she had had so many stolen meetings with Emile in days that were past.

These meetings she felt could never be repeated, and she resolved to make the best of life she could in England. She had not the least vague idea of Emile's being in this country, although he had arrived only a week before.

As his funds were not yet exhausted or stolen, and his darling object being to become well educated, he determined at once to attend school; and after having made several inquiries concerning such institutions, he decided upon one.

Thither he went, matriculated, and experienced as many hardships as many fresh fish, principally on account of his secretory of English.

But he was a whole-souled boy, and the students, finding it out, liked him very much. He took a prominent part in every game, and in all the mischief too.

Many were the tricks he helped to play on the unsuspecting—even the professors did not escape—therefore he received about an equal share of the marks of demerit for ill conduct also; but he was always perfect in his lessons, and to his credit, it may be said, he never received a bad mark under this head.

After about a year and a half his means were ex-

hausted, and he had, much to his regret, to discontinue school and look out for a situation.

He had long been elected president of the students' club, but now he must resign and go—he knew not whither. He was loth to leave, although his student life was arduous in the extreme.

After bidding his school-fellows adieu, Emile travelled on foot a long way; but he failed to get employment, although he applied at almost every farmhouse. He was without money or friends, in a strange country, and he felt discouraged, sick and down-hearted.

More than once did his thoughts wander back to France, and he remembered the fair but false Irene lost across the channel. He wondered how she could treat him as she did when they had vowed to love each other for ever.

"Oh, she was false—utterly false!" he thought, "I would like to see her, but perhaps she does not care to see me. It may be that she never even thinks of me," he murmured, bitterly.

Therefore he suffered himself to dwell no longer on such a hopeless love. Employment was what he most needed, and if he could obtain it he calculated to save his earnings as formerly, and thus he would soon be enabled to return to school again.

Finally he came upon a large and imposing building, situated on a high hill, with an elegant yard and walks in front and beautiful gardens in the rear.

This was a fashionable watering-place to which many of the wealthy citizens of London annually resorted.

Emile, being tired and hungry, stopped and asked for a night's lodging. He was received kindly and ushered into a room where there were four or five great girls, whose eyes dilated as if to look through him.

He had been debarred all social intercourse with the fair sex during his stay at college, and now to be so abruptly brought in contact with so many buxom girls was very embarrassing to him indeed.

The gardener, William Murphy, or Will, as he was more familiarly called, seemed to take the greatest interest in him, and learning that the young stranger desired employment, and, needing more help in the gardens, he spoke to the proprietor in his behalf, and consequently Emile was employed.

He was delighted with the prospect before him. The beauty of the surroundings, the picturesque scenery and hilarious company, after having been so down-hearted, were pleasant to him indeed.

All this, with good wages and free use of the mineral waters, which had become renowned for their curative qualities, were calculated to encourage him very much.

Will Murphy, who was born of Irish parents and who had wandered over a great portion of the globe, seemed to take a lively interest in Emile, and contributed no little to his enjoyment and happiness. Many were the happy hours they spent in each other's society.

Emile was well aware of the proverbial temper of the Irish generally, but, notwithstanding this and what others told him about his new friend, he thought Will had the most amiable disposition of any gentleman he ever knew. Many were the amusements to which they resorted for their mutual enjoyment and the delight of others and many were the times they played at cards and other sociable games, in which also the lively girls participated.

Thus "all went merry as a marriage bell" until the first day of April, commonly called "All Fools' Day." On this day each and every one exerted himself or herself to make a great fool of some particular friend or acquaintance.

Will took the greatest interest therein, and prevailed on Emile's entering into the harmless spirit of fun that prevailed.

Late in the afternoon Emile, yielding to his friend's persuasions, concluded also to participate in the fun-making. He wrote a few love-verses, and as he knew of no one whom he thought would relish them better, he directed them to his friend.

At about ten in the evening Will hurriedly entered the room, sat down by Emile, and proceeded to compliment him upon the high order of his talents. After a moment, however, Emile caught the keen, restless glance of Will's eyes, which did not impress him at all favourably. The verses had touched a wrong chord in Will's heart. Emile denied being the author of them, of course, but not stoutly, and there was nothing further said about the matter until the girls had gone to their rooms and the boys had retired. Then Will remarked:

"I can prove that you wrote those verses, Emile," and without giving him time to answer, added, "I can prove something more too."

"What is it?" interrogated Emile.

"That you are an idiot for writing them!" con-

tinued Will, in the most insulting tone imaginable. This unexpected rebuke touched Emile's heart to the core, but he only replied, in a calm, firm voice:

"That is enough for to-night. I do not wish to hear another word from you!"

Emile did not go to sleep very early that night. He studied the insult over and over again, but did not decide upon any particular course to pursue to receive satisfaction. He arose next morning, looking as if he had passed a night in revelry. He saw the unfortunate verses lying upon the floor. He picked them up, held them toward his late friend, and remarked:

"You insisted yesterday, sir, that I should join in the fun-making. Yielding to your solicitations, this is what I produced, and what can be found in these verses to justify you in calling me an idiot for having written them?"

Will was silent. After a pause Emile continued:

"Will Murphy, you have got to retract—you must retract!"

"I will not! See—I have a revolver!" exclaimed Will, as he excitedly thrust his hand into his trousers pocket.

"Then you shall use it!" returned Emile, as he advanced with the fire of gathering elements gleaming in his eyes.

A sharp report rang out—there was a pause, and Emile's left arm hung uselessly by his side, shattered and bleeding. The difficulty was settled, and naught remained for Emile to do but to leave the house as soon as his wounded arm would permit. This he did.

Upon leaving he remarked to Will that he never wished to meet him again, for he had found him "treacherous, false, and despicable." Emile felt that at some day he would be revenged. He knew not in what way it would come about, yet he felt sure that the end was still to come.

He went to the nearest station and took the train for London, desiring to obtain more genteel employment in the city.

But he was disappointed in this. After wandering for several days over the city, applying at almost every door but failing to obtain employment, he was about giving up in despair when a milk-cart coming up the street somehow attracted his attention. He naturally thought of the happy hours he had passed driving a milk-cart, more than two years before. As the cart approached Emile looked at the name with renewed interest, because it seemed to him that he had seen that man before.

He glanced at the name—Beauchamp. Behold! it was his old employer who had come to this country.

They were both surprised and very glad to meet each other.

Emile soon acquainted his old employer with his biography since they parted in France. He also acquainted him with his circumstances, and asked him to again give him employment.

Mr. Beauchamp knew that Emile had been a good servant, and as he was familiar with the English language he was only too glad to hire him again to drive his milk-cart.

So once more was Emile in a milk-cart, and naturally enough his thoughts wandered back after his little dark-haired Italian girl. It was only in thought, for he had heard nothing of her; so he worked on, little knowing what was about to take place.

### CHAPTER III.

The hot, sultry month of July had come, and Mrs. Williams contemplated making a visit to some of the fashionable watering-places.

Irene was delighted with the idea of going to such a place. She felt unusually happy as the train went puffing out from the heat and dust of the city. It passed rapidly through a balmy country, and after winding about a few vine-clad hills the whistle sounded their arrival.

There was the large building with elegant walks in the foreground, and beautiful gardens in the rear, the same Emile had gazed upon a few weeks before. Everything looked well excepting that a slight neglect was visible in the gardens. True enough; Will had been drinking lately, and consequently had neglected his duty. He was at the present time very ill, and not being liked there he was himself neglected.

Irene was in the house but a few days when she heard of the gardener's illness, and saw that he needed sympathy and kind attention; so the good-hearted girl would gather flowers and take to his room, give him water, and bestow upon him many favours.

She seemed like a gleam of sunshine coming into Will's darkened chamber, and, as might have been expected, he soon began to love her very much.

But it was not love of him that caused Irene to so patiently wait upon him; it was only sympathy for him in his deserted condition, seeing, as she did, that he was so neglected. As he recovered, Irene lost her sympathy for him, grew shy, and kept as much as she could out of his reach.

This only made Will more assiduous in his devotions, and he pleaded, begged, promised to reform—anything, if she would only be his wife.

Will had soon exhausted every means kindness could suggest, but all alike utterly failed to make any impression upon Irene. She seemed to grow colder and shunned him the more. But Will was not to be overcome. He was far from honourable, and now resolved to resort to strategy to accomplish his undertaking.

Accordingly he stole the key from Irene's portfolio, took advantage of the absence of Mrs. Williams, entered her room, and found what he had dared to hope for—that she had carelessly left some valuable jewellery on the toilet-stand.

He gathered it up in all haste, unlocked Irene's portfolio, and carefully deposited it therein—all save one large, heavy ring, which he concealed upon his person.

A few minutes after, Mrs. Williams returned to her room, and immediately missed her jewellery.

"Who could have taken it in so short a time?" she mentally exclaimed.

She immediately raised an alarm, but no one could account for its mysterious disappearance.

"Maybe it was your servant?" suggested some one.

"Yes!" exclaimed Will, who seemed to take much interest in the matter; "she went away early in the afternoon."

"Look into her portfolio!" cried another.

Immediately the portfolio was broken open, and there the jewellery was—all except the ring, which was set with a diamond, and very valuable.

"She has taken it and hurried away!" cried one.

"Go after her!" cried another.

"Where is she?" asked Mrs. Williams; but she could not believe Irene guilty of such a theft.

Will knew in what direction Irene sometimes strolled in the afternoon. He rushed directly to her, hurriedly and excitedly told her what had happened, and that they were looking for her to take her to jail.

"What shall I do?" exclaimed Irene, in a frightened tone.

"Go with me, Irene, I will save you. Go with me immediately!" urged Will.

"No, I cannot!" answered Irene.

And yet, in the excitement of the moment, the frightened girl allowed herself to be dragged along. Away they ran, up and down hills, through the woods, across the fields—away. Every step brought them nearer to the city where Emile was.

Will congratulated himself inwardly on his success. He doubted not that the girl would consent to marry him now. But Irene was silent. She deeply hated Will, and had no notion of uniting her fate with his.

Arrived in the city, Irene soon obtained a situation, but was miserably despondent and unhappy. Will was bewildered and knew not what to do. He would not attempt to sell the diamond ring he had stolen, it might lead to his arrest. He wandered from one place to another in fear and suspense.

As he was standing at the corner of a street one day, in a very despondent mood, whom should he see but Emile! He well knew that his former friend had a good heart, and he now felt that he had wronged him; so, after some hesitation, he took courage and approached him.

"How are you, Emile?" he said.

Emile heard his voice, saw the man, and shrank back as from a great enemy. Recovering from his surprise presently, he asked:

"Do you dare speak to me?"

"Yes, answered Will. "I know I wronged you, Emile, but I am in trouble. I ask your forgiveness, and I hope you will assist me."

(To be continued.)

## THYRA DESMOND;

OR,

## THE MAIDEN OF THE LAKE.

### CHAPTER XLII.

LORD ORANMORE stood before them—that was a sufficient surprise for the lake maiden and the earl, but there was even more stirring alarm in the first words of bitter irony that he spoke ere the bewilderment at his sudden appearance had subsided.

"So this is the supplement to your jealous passion, my Lord Ashworth," said the viscount, in tones of the most searching irony. "You were very willing to risk your own life and commit murder on me, in order to secure Lady Beatrice Clare and her fortune for yourself, now I find you equally anxious to appropriate a young lady under the protection of Sir Hilary Vesci, and who, I hope for her own sake, is perfectly unaware that you are an engaged man, or, rather, wish to be considered so when it suits your purpose."

Lord Ashworth listened coolly to the sarcasms thus poured out upon him. His nature was too self-controlled, and his consciousness of strength and honour too dear for him to lose his self-possession under the passionate and jealous attack of a younger and more vehement man.

But the contempt that instinctively appeared in his fine features was far more crushing than words, and yet, to say sooth, it acted very much as water is sometimes said to do on flame, and only caused the passion to blaze more violently in his rival's breast.

"I am glad at any rate that you are so perfectly recovered, my lord," he said, calmly. "Whatever may be my relations with Lady Beatrice or Miss Desmond, I decline to account for my actions in any way to you."

"Yet you dared to call me to account for my attentions to a lady, and certainly, if you were not engaged to her you had no pretext for such insolence," exclaimed the viscount, in uncontrollable passion. "And if you are engaged to Lady Beatrice you have no right to trifle with Miss Desmond, and deceive her, as I presume, for the sake of her reputation, you have done."

Lord Ashworth was about to reply, but Thyra, who had hitherto stood in speechless and embarrassed distress during the sharp passage of arms, hastily interfered.

"Pardon me, Lord Ashworth, but this concerns me alone," said she, proudly. "I deny altogether Lord Oranmore's right in any way to comment on or control my actions. He is scarcely even known to me, and I decline even to explain the very simple circumstances that led to my presence. It will be quite enough to satisfy Miss Vesci on the subject."

"Only that Sir Hilary may perhaps claim from his guest and his son's old friend a little more candour than you seem willing to show, Miss Desmond," returned the viscount. "I am sure you could not wilfully do wrong. I am much more willing to believe that you have been utterly misled by this gentleman," he added, sneeringly, "and, as a man of honour, I am only doing my duty in seeking to protect a young and defenceless girl, and also in saving Miss Vesci from a great grief. I shall know how to deal with you, Lord Ashworth, since the warrant for your arrest is not yet recalled, and I shall certainly enforce it unless you promise to leave the country and liberate Lady Beatrice Clare from your tyrannical control."

"And leave my cousin, of whom I am the sole male relative, to your capricious suit, is that it, Lord Oranmore?" said Gaston, sneeringly. "I decline, as Miss Desmond has already done, to account in the slightest degree for what I may see fit to do with respect to her or to any other lady, and, as to the warrant, I laugh at the idea of being punished for the murder of a living man."

"Ah, that is all very well, my lord, but there are other punishments and lesser crimes than hanging for murder," returned Lord Oranmore, bitterly, "and I call upon you now to give yourself up to justice in preference to being hunted down by the officers, who are even at this very minute on your track. It will only make a difference of some few hours, as the plan of your capture is fully organized, I assure you, and I came hither this morning from your present residence to warn you of the fact. So you see your movements are pretty well watched since I know so well where to find you."

"And if I had wished to escape I could have done so months since," said the earl, with proud contempt. "Do you suppose I should have remained here had I not felt more compunction that blood was on my hands than alarm for my personal safety? But now that all that is over and you are in perfect health I shall act very differently. I defy you to cast one stain on my character, whatever may rest on your own, and I only regret the publicity you are giving to the matter because it must bring Lady Beatrice's name into unpleasant notoriety."

"Miss Desmond," he added, turning to Thyra with a tender respect in his manner that spoke volumes to the lovely girl's heart, "we know but little perhaps of each other if our acquaintance is to be measured by time, but we have met in circumstances that give more insight into character than

months of ordinary friendship, and I ask you now, before this passionate and hot-headed man, whether you do or do not trust me, whether you have ever had or might have reason to suppose I was deceiving you as to my position or feelings." In justice to yourself I wish you to answer me as you would were you not at the confessional altar," he said, gravely, "but before the bright vault of Heaven, where each word is heard and tested."

There was a solemnity in his manner that had for the moment a composing effect on Hugh Orammore's impetuous nature. He stood rather silently than calmly, waiting for the girl's answer, and with his eyes fixed on her sweet though agitated face, with its rare beauty and its noble expression of truth and intellect.

She seemed calmed by the very appeal, by the freemasonry that exists between kindred natures, and which at once made her comprehend Gaston's real feelings and purpose, and her whole sympathies were enlisted to strengthen her on his behalf.

There was a ringing truth in her very tone as she spoke, and an unflinching glance in her eye which did not admit of one shadow of a doubt, as she replied:

"Never, Lord Ashworth. I have never heard one word or seen one look that would have misled me in my estimate of you since the hour when you helped to save my life and we first met on the shore of Lough Corrib. If Lord Orammore desires to injure me in the opinion of the friends with whom I am now living it is at his own risk and gratuitous wrong to an innocent woman. You have done no wrong."

"Oh, no, of course," exclaimed the viscount, his passion still more modulated by the defence that gave his rival such an advantage over him. "I comprehend it all. You can scarcely think me so easily bamboozled, Miss Desmond, as not to see your object in defending this plausible gentleman. However, one thing I must condition as the price of my forbearance—that you will accompany me back to Rosanna, from which your absence will certainly excite remark, and for you, Lord Ashworth, my counsel certainly is that you should at once give yourself up and thus secure the most favourable judgment that can be given by your compeers."

He stood defiantly as he spoke, and Gaston's blood was beginning to boil in his veins when the gentle voice of the young maiden arrested the fire once more from his threatened outbreak.

"Hush, Lord Ashworth," she said, softly, "do not you add to my trouble by distracting my innocence and prudence. I fear him not, because I have nothing on my conscience—nothing," she added, "and if he persists in casting any stain on my name it will but recoil on himself. You can but harm me by any interference. Do not risk it, I implore," she added, in her pleading voice, that few men at any rate could have resisted.

Gaston comprehended aright. He could see the futility of her request, and though most men with his feelings towards her and her companion would have yielded to the jealous pique that heated his very veins he restrained the impulse and answered, in all cool and dignified compliance:

"It would be cruel wrong to doubt you, Miss Desmond, and I would not willingly insult even this passionate and resentful opponent of mine by thinking for a moment he could misuse the opportunity he will enjoy. Heaven preserve and bless you till we meet again. You will not think evil of me whatever you may hear; and for you, Lord Orammore, I defy your very worst. Let your agents come, and I shall neither avoid nor seek them."

And the earl walked calmly away, leaving Thyra and the viscount still standing on the spot where the whole scene had taken place.

Thyra's eyes involuntarily followed his retreating figure, and it might be that Lord Orammore's anger was increased by the trifling circumstance.

"Perhaps we had better lose no more time, Miss Desmond," he said, offering her his hand to assist her down the steep descent.

But the girl declined it with a bow and sprang lightly down the stony rock as if it had been on level ground.

Hugh was quickly at her side as she passed on. "You are angry with me without knowing the real truth, Miss Desmond," he said, in a tone of some mortification. "You do not know all that has taken place between Lord Ashworth and myself, nor the amount of suffering he has inflicted on me."

"I am perfectly neutral in the matter, my lord," she said, coldly. "It is not for me to decide between two who are nearly strangers to me, even if it could signify in the very least what my opinion of the matter might be."

"But it does—it does," he answered, vehemently. "You know perfectly that Lord Ashworth admires

you, you could read it in his very look and words, his very gesture, but, what is worse, I fear that it is his won on your innocent trustfulness and gratitude. You do not believe that what I have told him to his face is truth—that he is betrothed to Lady Beatrice Clare—and not only that, he will not give her up, for the sake of her large fortune, and yet he does not frankly and honourably give her up, but rather would force her by his neglect to assert her own dignity by her own dismissal. And because I did not act as if she were a princess, and because I paid her the ordinary attention that a beautiful girl may fairly expect, he so insulted me that I had no alternative but to vindicate honour at the expense of my life. Now you have heard all, and I ask you whether I am to blame?"

Thyra shook her head sadly.

"Alas, alas! there must be great blame somewhere," she replied, "but it may be that neither you nor Lord Ashworth understood each other in the affair, and it is a grievous folly that the quarrel is not wiped out by the blood that has been shed. If you knew that Lady Beatrice was betrothed to him you cannot wonder that he should have been annoyed and resentful at your admiration of her. Surely you might excuse that," she went on, softly. "Why not tell him frankly and kindly that you can feel for him and let the bitter feeling cease for ever? Lord Orammore, be generous and noble, and conquer this wretched jealousy," she went on, turning to her eager-as towards him with that meaningly winning look of hers.

Hugh was too much occupied in his examination of the fair speaker to bestow as much thought as they perhaps deserved on the words she was uttering.

"It is difficult to make one so gentle as you are, Miss Desmond, understand what is man's fierce rivalry and passion," he said; "but still it is your sex's privilege to soften and heal these tumults of the life's battle. And it would be easy to mould me to your will if I thought you had any interest in my actions or my fame, Thyra."

The girl walked on more leisurely, but took no other notice of the words or looks of her companion till he spoke again.

"You have a rare fascination in your very presence, Miss Desmond," he went on, more resolutely. "You have bewitched the wavering faith of Gaston Ashworth and—shall I confess it?—you have excited in me such feelings as I have never deemed it possible I could have ever been so speedily attracted by any woman's beauty, as I have been by yours. I know not why, I am well nigh ashamed of the confession," he continued, vehemently, "but it is of no use denying it, and you can use the knowledge as you best may to save life and prevent sorrow."

"And how—in what manner?" answered the girl, without any of the flutter of gratified vanity or alarm which such an avowal might well create.

"It is tolerably plain I should think," he answered, in a tone of decided pique. "If you have the very slightest sympathy with true love or its disappointments the whole course of events will be plain to you. If you do not care for Gaston Ashworth and merely plead for him from a more natural and womanly pity for those in trouble, I could feel a far milder resentment that when he seems to be running in my course, and crossing my every wish and plan. I could better pardon his conduct to Beatrice Clare than yourself."

"If Lady Beatrice or her friends have no more to complain of than myself there will be very little ground for forgiveness," said Thyra, haughtily. "I reserve my power to think and act as I choose, my lord," she added, coldly. "And I am certain Lord Ashworth would not allow any interference with him or his conduct from me or any one. There is the breakfast bell," she went on, after a few moments' pause. "I should advise you to hasten, for Sir Hilary is especially annoyed by the slightest unpunctuality. I am going to Miss Vesce, who will wonder at my long delay." And without waiting for a reply the young girl flew away like a light and fleet-footed gale.

#### CHAPTER XLIII.

"WHERE have you been, what can have detained you so late?" was in truth the fretful demand of the invalid as Thyra entered the accustomed sitting-room, after a slight alteration in her disordered toilet, which the rapid walk had made necessary.

The girl did not flush, simply because she had been fully prepared for some such attack on her appearance in Erica's apartments.

She might not have dreamed once that the young and gentle invalid could be capable of such an unjust harshness, but the last few hours had decided by altered her ideas, and she was by no means surprised at the attack that might be merited or not, be levelled at her for her involuntary tardiness.

It was with some difficulty that she modulated her

voice so that no trace of annoyance or resentment might be detected in its tones.

"I took an early walk, I went farther than I expected, and I scarcely knew the time," returned the lake maiden, with perfect truth in the answer, even though she might not actually convey the whole state of matters to her young patroness.

Erica's lips did not relax to their usual smile, which was wont to soften the temporary harshness of her invalid's demands.

"Well, we had better not distress ourselves by any further argument," said the young lady, more lightly; "let us have some breakfast at last, I am quite faint this morning for want of it."

Thyra made no reply, she saw that some rankling prejudice still lingered in Erica's mind, and trusted to time and her innocence to check it. She knew well that silence and patience was her best, and only remedy.

So the coffee was poured carefully out, the white delicate rolls buttered and sliced and an egg prepared temptingly for the invalid with her usual care, albeit the manner of their reception was so very different from the usual gentle gratitude for the smallest service.

"What made you go out so early?" she asked, at length, after sweetening the cups of fragrant mocha.

"I am fond of early rising. I have always been used to it. I have often rowed across Lough Corrib before breakfast when I was at home."

"Who for? and who with?" were the strangely sharp questions that succeeded.

"To go to my most intimate friend, who lived on the opposite side, and I was quite alone," said Thyra. "And were you quite alone this morning?" asked Erica, half as it appeared in jest and half in most severe and bitter earnest.

It was a difficult question to answer.

Thyra could certainly have ventured on an evasion, if not worse, in her reply.

She grasped full well what the knowledge of the truth would entail, and yet there was a lofty transparency in her nature, a contempt of the very shadow of falsehood that forbade the most tempting subterfuge.

"I was not," she said, "although I had no idea whatever of meeting or seeing any one when I started, Miss Vesce. I presume you will do me the justice to believe this."

Erica's lips curled slightly.

"You mean that Lord Orammore was there?" she said, in a hard, cold tone. "He would be the only person in the neighbourhood who could be likely to join your walks."

"I have no answer to make except that I have already given," said Thyra, calmly. "You must presume me very false if you cannot trust me after such intimate companionship. It was folly for me to remain with you if that is the case, Miss Vesce."

"That is the second time you have called me by that name, when you know that I cannot endure you to use it," returned Erica, pettishly. "It is just like the rest, you do not care to please me now in anything, now that Lord Orammore is here. I did not think you would so soon have got tired and left me to my own sad loneliness, Thyra."

The words, the tone, the familiar name, all tended to touch the heart of the lake maiden, and she at once softened in her assumption of dignity and self-assertion.

"No, no, I am not; I never should be tired unless you sent me away from you," said the girl, eagerly, throwing herself on the side of the couch, where Erica half-reclined. "Only it does seem so hard and cruel for you to doubt me when, whatever I have been obliged to admit, it has not been my fault or my wish to—"

Thyra was becoming somewhat confused, since the very phraseology rather implied an alteration in herself that was precisely most irritating to Miss Vesce.

And before she had time to collect her thoughts and correct the mode of conveying the real truth both she and Erica were startled by the sound of a voice near them:

"Rise, Miss Desmond. This is either hypocrisy or meanness. If you were sincere in your repentance and regard you would act very differently," said the stern, irate voice of Sir Hilary Vesce.

And glaring round they perceived the baronet was standing observing them with a concentrated anger and disappointment and mortification in his features that his daughter had rarely seen in his countenance.

Thyra involuntarily started to her feet. There was a proud indignation as well as some degree of confused surprise in her mien that did not altogether boken submission or confusion in the avowed culprit.

"May I ask what you really mean, Sir Hilary?"

she said, seeing that the baronet did not at once continue. "I utterly beg to deny that I have given you the slightest cause for the charges you are ungenerous enough to make."

"We shall soon see that," exclaimed Sir Hilary, jocosely, for it was so completely new to him to meet with any opposition, "a very few minutes will determine that—only that I do not wish to agitate Miss Vesci by carrying on a discussion in her presence."

"Yes, yes, papa, let me hear all. You have been so good and kind to indulge all my whims that I prefer knowing all that can be said to prove you are right and I am wrong in this wretched business," interrupted Erica, hastily; "it will do me good. I could hardly realize it unless you were to prove it to me—this little creature that your indulgence has made me."

"My poor darling, I am so grieved that it should be so, and that your sorrow should be increased by this young woman's vain and improper coquetry," was the soothing reply of the fond father, placing himself close to his daughter's side and pointing with an innate, though morose, good breeding to a rather distant chair for the accommodation of the culprit during the coming examination. "But," he exclaimed, "it can be proved out of the very lips of your former favourite that she is most culpable and unworthy of your childish affection, and should she perverticate I can very soon bring evidence to settle all that to your satisfaction, or at any rate to your belief." He went on with a half-smile of impatience at his own blundering expression.

"Go on, papa, what is it?" asked Erica, in a low tone and with quivering lip.

It seemed as if her father's deep and vindictive rage rather moved to calm and subdue her own.

"Well, then, we will begin with a very simple question," commenced the baronet. "Pray, Miss Desmond, do you know anything of a gentleman called 'the Earl of Ashworth'?"

"Very little, Sir Hilary, and that so vague and uncertain that it hardly answers the name," was the quick reply.

It almost proved the power of the young earl over that young heart that his danger should in any way tend to nerve her to cool and self-reliant control for his sake.

"Oh, that does not seem very indefensible to a young lady of such easy and ambitious ideas," said the baronet, still more anxiously. "It is not the only instance where such rapid intimacy seemed to have grown up. You have not been so very slow to make the acquaintance of Lord Oranmore or to give him early and solitary meetings, though you were forbidden to carry on any more comfortable and easy flirtations, I suppose," he continued. "You will hardly deny that you met the viscount, my guest and my son's old friend, at St. Kevin's Lake this morning, not many hours ago?"

"I do utterly deny it, Sir Hilary," she replied, with contemptuous emphasis; "and, what is more, I never could have been induced to such a proceeding."

"Then it is all a mistake. You were not there, or he was not there, which?" returned Sir Hilary, with withering scorn. "Take care, young woman, that you do not go beyond even my patience."

"Lord Oranmore happened to come to the spot that I had chosen to read a little while," she said, impatiently. "If he is to be in the least believed as a gentleman, he dare not, he could not deny what he himself told me."

"Ah, of course, you would have some conversation and you remained together some time, and so far I can gather, you were also waiting for the appearance of another comparative stranger, Miss Desmond, I consider such conduct simply disgraceful. You are evidently angling for some chance of obtaining a more permanent and eligible home, but you would very soon find out your mistake. You are but tempting disgrace and ruin, and will utterly lose your character in the degrading attempt."

"I have no farther reply to make, Sir Hilary. I have no more consciousness of wrong, no more abashment of such unmanly conduct on my character than your own daughter," she said, calmly; "and if you do judge me so harshly it may be that one day it may reveal on her innocent head," she went on. "In her name and for her sake, I ask you to suspend such cruelty and injustice till it may be proved that I am such a degraded creature."

It was a bold appeal, and perhaps more impulsive from the soft, clear tones of the youthful lips that uttered it.

Erica glanced from one to the other of the speakers with an embarrassment that showed how doubt of Thyra's jealous pique, and womanly sympathy, were glowing in her breast.

and Sir Hilary was too sternly irritated to pause

in his resolutions as to the object of his wrath. The more firm and unflinching she appeared the more indignant and perplexed he became. An appeal for pity and humble confession of wrong would at any rate have justified him in his wrath and appeased his sternness.

"It is all well, Miss Desmond," he said; "but it is as well to cut this matter short. I have no authority over you, except so far as you are an inmate of my household and a constant companion to my daughter, and the grand issue of all this is that I will not allow any more breach of propriety on your part during your residence here. It will be for me and Miss Vesci to consider more coolly whether it will be possible or advisable for you to remain for a second trial of your obedience to the rules of an honourable family, or to leave so soon as arrangements can be made to that effect."

The whole injustice, the harsh cruelty of the proceeding, might well excite a momentary yielding to ungoverned resentment on the girl's part.

Her whole face lighted up from its usual gentle and patiently softness to a perfect blaze of indignant passion, such as, perhaps, had never been seen in her girlish features before.

But though the change was certainly remarkable enough to excite surprise in the old baronet's and his daughter's minds, though there was a brilliant beauty in that now animation that was sufficient to excite admiration in the breasts of the most prejudiced against the assumed girl, it was scarcely sufficient to combat for the emotion start and the almost dazed eye of Sir Hilary Vesci.

His eyes were fixed on the young creature with what was almost a fascinated stare of examination, as if he had never before seen that fair face or could comprehend the youthful beauty in the fresh phase of its expression.

Erica looked from one to the other in some astonishment, as well as sorrowful regret, and she tried to discern the exact object of the sacred surprise that thus agitated her father on apparently so trivial a cause.

She could not discern a bright gleam of hope that came for the moment on the fair temple of her friend, and which took for the moment the precise shape of a cross, tiny in its form but most unmistakable in its curiously defined outline.

She had never noticed it before on Thyra's face, though the hair had always been worn by her in the same fashion so as to expose it to view. She too was almost as much struck with the phenomenon as Sir Hilary himself.

"Have you ever had a hurt or a scar on your temple, young lady?" he said apparently in disregard of the next words that might come from the girl's lips, or the evident anger that evidently disturbed her spirit.

"No, not that I am aware of," returned Thyra, as much surprised in her turn at the peremptory question.

"For all that you sometimes look as if you had been so wounded," he returned, in the same abstracted and most utterly changed manner of address to the luckless object of his displeasure.

"I really do not know. I never remember being told that it was so," she replied, in almost the same involuntary engrossment with the new idea of the baronet.

"Ah, then, I suppose it was an accident," he said, quickly. "However, we will not dwell any longer on so unpleasant a subject, Miss Desmond, as has occupied us to-day. I shall have some further converse with Lord Oranmore, and also with Miss Vesci, before I decide on the best mode of preventing this impropriety occurring again; and, meanwhile, you will be so good as to confine yourself to your own and my daughter's especial apartments."

Thyra quietly listened to the blantly spoken words, but, if they in any degree modified her feelings, it was rather to turn anger into contempt than to appease it altogether.

"Pardon me, Sir Hilary," she said, "but for my own sake I cannot let this rest so quietly. I am so entirely innocent from the very vestige of wrong—except that I could not help some interest in the misfortunes of Lord Ashworth, to whom I owe my life in some measure, and that can be no cause for shame. I cannot stay here under such stain or ban. I came entirely at your prayer. I quitted the position I should probably have long held in Lady Mand's household, for your daughter's sake, and I am quite ready to go now that I find I cannot trust your kindness or your justice, and as you say, it will be better, till it can be arranged for me to leave Rosanne, that I should remain in my own proper apartments, when Miss Vesci does not require my services."

Sir Hilary was fairly taken aback.

This helpless girl was too much for him to direct or to manage with his usual overbearing imperious-

ness. The calm dignity with which she took the initiative and turned the tables upon him was far more perplexing than her utmost anger could have proved.

The earnestness of her truth in stating the reason of her residence there, the allusion to her own reluctance to accept his earnest offer, was also the more galling, since it put him so entirely in the wrong, and yet he would not give way, more especially when dear and proud interests were at such an issue.

"I am responsible at any rate for your future plans and safety on leaving Rosanne, Miss Desmond," he said, coldly. "If you are of opinion that under the present circumstances it would be better for you to quit your situation, I certainly shall not oppose it; but I will make arrangements for you to go elsewhere on leaving Rosanne, instead of your being thrown on the world at your own will and pleasure."

Thyra bowed coldly.

She could not commit herself either refusing or accepting the offer till she had considered fairly all its consequences.

She had no taste for any kind of damsel errantry, and she knew perfectly that if she was about to leave Sir Hilary Vesci's home after the curt terms on which she had parted from Lady Mand, she would be most probably thrown destitute and homeless on the world.

And till she could think and organize her plans it was wiser for her to reserve her actions to the plans for her future could be fully arranged.

Sir Hilary seemed rather relieved by her silence; he rose nervously from his seat, and, stooping down to kiss and whisper a word to his daughter, he quickly passed on to the room.

The lake maiden was about to follow his example when she was arrested by the broken accents of her young charge.

"Thyra," said the invalid, in a voice which spoke of tears, "Thyra, do not—do not leave me in such anger."

"I am not angry, but I was grieved and disappointed, Miss Vesci," answered the girl, returning for a moment to the side of the couch. "It is over now; I was very shocked and indignant, but I have conquered it, and I am only sad, very sad, so far as you are in question."

It was rather perplexing—for Erica Vesci's spirit had no little haughtiness in it—and she recoiled from the idea of submitting to an unknown dependent on her father's bounty and her own wayward fancy.

"You must allow that it was very strange and suspicious that you should do so, especially after I had told you what I did and trusted you where I could hardly have trusted my weakness to a sister," argued the invalid, in a wailing tone.

"No, I did nothing that ought to have made you blame me," replied the girl, firmly. "Nothing, Miss Vesci. I could not imagine that any one, and more especially a convalescent invalid, would be up at such an hour, and I longed for air and escape from my imprisonment. It is like caging a bird to keep me indoors day after day, when my whole life has been spent in such freedom," she added, impatiently, for her whole spirit was chafed at the renewed charge implied by Erica's words.

"Alas, alas! and cannot you feel for me then?" was the invalid's reply. "Have not I the same cause to complain—I, who spent half my time in fishing and riding and rambling about the hills? And now, Thyra, now I may never leave Rosanne save in a carriage—or," she added, plaintively, "in a hearse."

It was touching enough to prevail with a young and sensitive orphan was that powerful plea, but then it had been used before, and for nothing but such a result as this.

"I hope, I believe it may be otherwise, and from my very heart," she replied. "But it be only from an accidental hearsay, Miss Vesci, I cannot remain to see—it is impossible now."

"No, no; he will be gone soon, and then all will come back to the old ways," pleaded Erica. "You will not leave me ill and helpless?"

"I must; you have made it necessary. I cannot remain," returned Thyra, calmly. "It was believed once before that it would be so, and the first shock has broken the cord that bound us. I forgive it from my heart from you, my dear Miss Vesci," she went on, "but not from Sir Hilary. He has no excuse like you—none; and I can never trust again in common self-respect, I must depart."

Erica saw the quiet resolution that betrayed itself in every tone and look of her favourite, and her heart sank at the certainty of the impending farewell.

For the moment she repented all or nearly all her jealous folly.

But her heart was Lord Oranmore's, child girl that she might be in age. She was fully and most fatally devoted to her brother's friend and all other affec-

months of ordinary friendship, and I ask you now, before this passionate and hot-headed man, whether you do or do not trust me, whether you have ever had or might have reason to suppose I was deceiving you as to my position or feelings. In justice to yourself I wish you to answer me as you would were you not at the confessional altar," he said, gravely, "but before the bright vault of Heaven, where each word is heard and tested."

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There was a ringing truth in her very tone as she spoke, and an unflinching glance in her eye which did not admit of one shadow of a doubt, as she replied:

"Never, Lord Ashworth. I have never heard one word or seen one look that would have misled me in my estimate of you since the hour when you helped to save my life and we first met on the shore of Lough Corrib. If Lord Oranmore desires to injure me in the opinion of the friends with whom I am now living it is at his own risk and gratuitous wrong to an innocent woman. You have done no wrong."

"Oh, no, of course," exclaimed the viscount, his passion still more raddened by the defence that gave his rival such an advantage over him. "I comprehend it all. You can scarcely think me so easily bamboozled, Miss Desmond, as not to see your object in defending this plausible gentleman. However, one thing I must condition as the price of my forbearance—that you will accompany me back to Rosanna, from which your absence will certainly excite remark, and for you, Mr. Ashworth, my counsel certainly is that you should at once give yourself up and thus secure the most favourable judgment that can be given by your peers."

He stood defiantly, as he spoke, and Gaston's blood was beginning to boil in his veins when the gentle voice of the young maiden arrested the fire once more from his threatened outbreak.

"Hush, Lord Ashworth," she said, softly, "do not you add to my trouble by distrustful incoherence and prudence. I fear him not, because I have nothing on my conscience—nothing," she added; "and if he persists in casting any stain on my name it will but recoil on himself. You can but harm me by any interference. Do not risk it, I implore," she added, in her pleading voice, that few men at any rate could have resisted.

Gaston comprehended aright. He could see the justice of her request, and though most men with his feelings towards her and her companion would have yielded to the jealous pique that heated his very veins he restrained the impulse and answered, in all cool and disguised complaisance:

"It would be cruel wrong to doubt you, Miss Desmond, and I would not willingly insult even this passionate and resentful opponent of mine by thinking for a moment he could misuse the opportunity he will enjoy. Heaven preserve and bless you till we meet again. You will not think evil of me whatever you may hear; and for you, Lord Oranmore, I defy your very worst. Let your agents come, and I shall neither avoid nor seek them."

And the earl walked calmly away, leaving Thyra and the viscount still standing on the spot where the whole scene had taken place.

Thyra's eyes involuntarily followed his retreating figure, and it might be that Lord Oranmore's anger was increased by the trifling circumstance.

"Perhaps we had better lose no more time, Miss Desmond," he said, offering her his hand to assist her down the steep descent.

But the girl declined it with a bow and sprang lightly down the stony rock as if it had been on level ground.

Hugh was quickly at her side as she passed on.

"You are angry with me without knowing the real truth, Miss Desmond," he said, in a tone of some mortification. "You do not know all that has taken place between Lord Ashworth and myself, nor the amount of suffering he has inflicted on me."

"I am perfectly neutral in the matter, my lord," she said, coldly. "It is not for me to decide between two who are nearly strangers to me, even if it could signify in the very least what my opinion of the matter might be."

"But it does—it does," he answered, vehemently. "You know perfectly that Lord Ashworth admires

you, you could read it in his very look and words, his very gesture, but, what is worse, I fear that it has won on your innocent trustfulness and gratitude. You do not believe that what I have told him to his face is truth—that he is betrothed to Lady Beatrice Clare—and not only that, he will not give her up, for the sake of her large fortune, and yet he does not frankly and honourably give her up, but rather would force her by his neglect to assert her own dignity by her own dismissal. And because I did not act as if she were a princess, and because I paid her the ordinary attention that a beautiful girl may fairly expect, he so insulted me that I had no alternative but to vindicate honour at the expense of my life. Now you have heard all, and I ask you whether I am to blame?"

Thyra shook her head sadly.

"Alas, alas! there must be great blame somewhere," she replied, "but it may be that neither you nor Lord Ashworth understood each other in the affair, and it is a grievous folly that the quarrel is not wiped out by the blood that has been shed. If you knew that Lady Beatrice was betrothed to him you cannot wonder that he should have been annoyed and resentful at your admiration of her. Surely you might excuse that," she went on, softly. "Why not tell him frankly and kindly that you can feel for him and let the bitter feeling cease for ever? Lord Oranmore, be generous and noble; and conquer this wretched jealousy," she went on, turning in her eagerness towards him with that meaningly winning look of hers.

Hugh was too much occupied in his examination of the fair speaker to bestow as much thought as they perhaps deserved on the words she was uttering.

"It is difficult to make one so gentle as you are, Miss Desmond, understand what is man's fierce rivalry and passion," he said; "but still it is your sex's privilege to soften and heal these tumults of the life's battle. And it would be easy to mould me to your will if I thought you had any interest in my actions or my fame, Thyra."

The girl walked on more leisurely, but took no other notice of the words or looks of her companion till he spoke again.

"You have a rare fascination in your very presence, Miss Desmond," he went on, more resolutely. "You have bewitched the wavering faith of Gaston Ashworth and—ah! I confess it!—you have excited in me such feelings as I have never deemed it possible I could have ever been so speedily attracted by any woman's beauty, as I have been by yours. I know not why, I am well nigh ashamed of the confession," he continued, vehemently, "but it is of no use denying it, and you can use the knowledge as you best may to save life and prevent sorrow."

"And how—in what manner?" answered the girl, without any of the flutter of gratified vanity or alarm which such an avowal might well create.

"It is tolerably plain I should think," he answered, in a tone of decided pique. "If you have the very slightest sympathy with true love or its disappointments the whole course of events will be plain to you. If you do not care for Gaston Ashworth and merely plead for him from a mere natural and womanly pity for those in trouble, I could feel a far milder resentment than when he seems to be running in my course, and crossing my every wish and plan. I could better pardon his conduct to Beatrice Clare than yourself."

"If Lady Beatrice or her friends have no more to complain of than myself there will be very little ground for forgiveness," said Thyra, laughingly. "I reserve my power to think and act as I choose, my lord," she added, coldly. "And I am certain Lord Ashworth would not allow any interference with him or his conduct from me or any one. There is the breakfast bell," she went on, after a few moments' pause. "I should advise you to hasten, for Sir Hilary is especially annoyed by the slightest unpunctuality. I am going to Miss Vesel, who will wonder at my long delay." And without waiting for a reply the young girl flew away like a light and foot-footed gale.

#### CHAPTER XLIII.

"WHERE have you been, what can have detained you so late?" was in truth the fretful demand of the invalid as Thyra entered the accustomed sitting-room, after a slight alteration in her disordered toilet, which the rapid walk had made necessary.

The girl did not flush, simply because she had been fully prepared for some such attack on her appearance in Erica's apartments.

She might not have dreamed once that the young and gentle invalid could be capable of such an unjust harshness, but the last few hours had decided by altered her ideas, and she was by no means surprised at the attack that might be merited or not, be levelled at her for her involuntary tardiness.

It was with some difficulty that she modulated her

voice so that no trace of annoyance or resentment might be detected in its tones.

"I took an early walk. I went farther than I expected, and I scarcely knew the time," returned the lady, with perfect truth in the answer, even though she might not actually convey the whole state of matters to her young patroness.

Erica's lips did not relax to their usual smile, which was wont to soften the temporary harshness of her invalid's demands.

"Well, we had better not distress ourselves by any further argument," said the young lady, more lightly; "let us have some breakfast at last, I am quite faint this morning for want of it."

Thyra made no reply, she saw that some rankling prejudice still lingered in Erica's mind, and trusted to time and her innocence to check it. She knew well that silence and patience was her best and only remedy.

So the coffee was poured carefully out, the white delicate rolls buttered and aliced and an egg prepared temptingly for the invalid with her usual care, albeit the manner of their reception was so very different from the usual gentle gratitude for the smallest service.

"What made you go out so early?" she asked, at length, after sweetening the cups of fragrant mocha.

"I am fond of early rising. I have always been used to it. I have often rowed across dear old Lough Corrib before breakfast when I was at home."

"Who for? and who with?" were the strangely sharp questions that succeeded.

"To go to my most intimate friend, who lived on the opposite side, and I was quite alone," said Thyra.

"And were you quite alone this morning?" asked Erica, half as it appeared in jest and half in most severe and bitter earnest.

It was a difficult question to answer.

Thyra could certainly have ventured on an evasion, if not worse, in her reply.

She grasped full well what the knowledge of this truth would entail, and yet there was a lofty transparency in her nature, a contempt of the very shadow of falsehood that forbade the most tempting subterfuge.

"I was not," she said, "although I had no idea whatever of meeting or seeing any one when I started, Miss Vesel. I presume you will do me the justice to believe this."

Erica's lips curled slightly.

"You mean that Lord Oranmore was there?" she said, in a hard, cold tone. "He would be the only person in the neighbourhood who could be likely to join your walks."

"I have no answer to make except that I have already given," said Thyra, calmly. "You must presume me very false if you cannot trust me after such intimate companionship. It were folly for me to remain with you if that is the case, Miss Vesel."

"That is the second time you have called me by that name, when you know that I cannot endure you to use it," returned Erica, pettishly. "It is just like the rest, you do not care to please me now in anything, now that Lord Oranmore is here. I did not think you would so soon have got tired and left me to my own sad loneliness, Thyra."

The words, the tone, the familiar name, all tended to touch the heart of the lady maiden, and she at once softened in her assumption of dignity and self-assertion.

"No, no, I am not; I never should be tired unless you sent me away from you," said the girl, eagerly, throwing herself on the side of the couch, where Erica half-reclined. "Only it does seem so hard and cruel for you to doubt me when, whatever I have been obliged to admit, it has not been my fault or my wish to—"

Thyra was becoming somewhat confused, since the very phraseology rather implied an alteration in herself that was precisely most irritating to Miss Vesel.

And before she had time to collect her thoughts and correct the mode of conveying the real truth both she and Erica were startled by the sound of a voice near them:

"Rise, Miss Desmond. This is either hypocrisy or madness. If you were sincere in your repentance and regard you would act very differently," said the stern, irate voice of Sir Hilary Vesel.

And glaring round they perceived the baronet standing observing them with a concentrated anger and disappointment and mortification in his features that his daughter had rarely seen in his countenance.

Thyra involuntarily started to her feet. There was a proud indignation as well as some degree of confused surprise in her mien that did not altogether boken submission or confusion in the arraigned culprit.

"May I ask what you really mean, Sir Hilary?"

she said, seeing that the baronet did not at once continue. "I utterly beg to deny that I have given you the slightest cause for the charges you are ungenerous enough to make."

"We shall soon see that," exclaimed Sir Hilary, jocosely, for it was so completely new to him to meet with any opposition, "a very few minutes will determine that—only that I do not wish to agitate Miss Vesci by carrying on a discussion in her presence."

"Yes, yes, papa, let me hear all. You have been so good and kind to indulge all my whims that I prefer knowing all that can be said to prove you are right and I am wrong in this wretched business," interrupted Erica, hastily; "it will do me good. I could hardly realize it unless you were to prove it to me—this little creature that your indulgence has made me."

"My poor darling, I am so grieved that it should be so, and that your sorrow should be increased by this young woman's vain and improper coquetry," was the soothing reply of the fond father, placing himself close in his daughter's side and pointing with an innate, though morose, good breeding to a rather distant chair for the accommodation of the out-cried during the coming examination. "But," he exclaimed, "it can be proved out of the very lips of your former favourite that she is most culpable and unworthy of your girl's affection, and should she prevail, I can very soon bring evidence to settle all that to your satisfaction, or at any rate to your belief." He went on, with a half-smile of impatience at his own blundering expression.

"Go on, papa, what is it?" asked Erica, in a low tone and with quivering lip.

It seemed as if her father's deep and vindictive rage rather seemed to calm and subdue her own.

"Well, then, we will begin with a very simple question," commenced the baronet. "Pray, Miss Desmond, do you know anything of a gentleman called 'the Earl of Ashworth'?"

"Very little, Sir Hilary, and that so vague and uncertain that it hardly deserves the name," was the quick reply.

It almost proved the power of the young earl over that young heart that his danger should in any way tend to nerve her to cool and self-reliant control for his sake.

"Oh, that does not seem very indispensable to a young lady of such easy and ambitious ideas," said the baronet, still more anxiously. "It is not the only instance where such rapid intimacy seemed to have grown up. You have not been so very slow to make the acquaintance of Lord Oranmore or to give him early and solitary meetings, though you were forbidden to carry on any more comfortable and easy flirtations, I suppose," he continued, "you will hardly deny that you met the viscount, my guest and my son's old friend, at St. Kevin's Lake this morning, not many hours ago?"

"I do utterly deny it, Sir Hilary," she replied, with contemptuous emphasis; "and, what is more, I never could have been induced to such a proceeding."

"Then it is all a mistake. You were not there, or he was not there, which?" returned Sir Hilary, with withering scorn. "Take care, young woman, that you do not go beyond even my patience."

"Lord Oranmore happened to come to the spot that I had chosen to rest a little while," she said, impatiently. "If he is to be in the least believed as a gentleman, he dare not, he could not deny what he himself told me."

"Ah, of course, you would have some conversation and you remained together some time, and so far I can gather, you were also waiting for the appearance of another comparative stranger, Miss Desmond. I consider such conduct simply disgraceful. You are evidently angling for some chance of obtaining a more permanent and eligible home, but you would very soon find out your mistake. You are but tempting disgrace and ruin, and will utterly lose your character in the degrading attempt."

"I have no farther reply to make, Sir Hilary. I have no more consciousness of wrong, no more shadow of such unwisely conducted on my character than your own daughter," she said, calmly; "and if you do judge me so harshly it may be that one day it may recoil on her innocent head," she went on. "In her name and for her sake, I ask you to suspend such severity and injustice till it may be proved that I am such a degraded creature."

It was a bold appeal, and perhaps more impulsive from the soft, clear tones of the youthful lips that uttered it.

Erica glanced from one to the other of the speakers with an embarrassment that showed her doubt of Thyra's jealous pique, and womanly sympathy, were contending in her breast.

But Sir Hilary was too sternly irritated to pause

in his resolutions as to the object of his wrath. The more firm and unflinching she appeared the more indignant and perplexed he became. An appeal for pity and humble confession of wrong would at any rate have justified him in his wrath and appeased his sternness.

"It is all well, Miss Desmond," he said; "but it is as well to cut this matter short. I have no authority over you, except so far as you are an inmate of my household and a constant companion to my daughter, and the grand issue of all this is that I will not allow any more breach of propriety on your part during your residence here. It will be for me and Miss Vesci to consider more coolly whether it will be possible or advisable for you to remain for a second trial of your obedience to the rules of an honourable family, or to leave so soon as arrangements can be made to that effect."

The whole injustice, the harsh cruelty of the proceeding, might well excite a momentary yielding to ungoverned resentment on the girl's part.

Her whole face lighted up from his usual gentle and suddenly softened to a perfect blaze of indignant passion, such as, perhaps, had never been seen in her girlish features before.

But though the change was certainly remarkable enough to excite surprise in the old baronet's and his daughter's minds, though there was a brilliant beauty in that novel animation that was sufficient to excite admiration in the breasts of the most prejudiced against the second girl, it was scarcely sufficient to consent for the sudden start and the almost dazed air of Sir Hilary Vesci.

His eyes were fixed on the young creature with what was almost a fascinated stare of examination, as if he had never before seen that fair face or could comprehend its youthful beauty in the fresh phase of its expression.

Erica looked from one to the other in some astonishment, as well as sorrowful regret, and she tried to discern the exact object of the secret surprise that thus agitated her father on apparently so trivial a cause.

She could but discern a bright spark that came for the moment on the pale temple of her friend, and which took for the moment the precise shape of a cross, tiny in its form, but most unmistakable in its curiously defined outline.

She had never noticed it before on Thyra's face, though the hair had always been worn by her in the same fashion so as to expose it in view. She too was almost as much struck with the phenomenon as Sir Hilary himself.

"Have you ever had a hurt or a scar on your temple, young lady?" he said apparently in disregard of the next words that might come from the girl's lips, or the evident anger that evidently disturbed her spirit.

"No, not that I am aware of," returned Thyra, as much surprised in her turn at the peremptory question.

"For all that you sometimes look as if you had been so wounded," he returned, in the same abstracted and most utterly changed manner of address to the luckless object of his displeasure.

"I really do not know. I never remember being told that it was so," she replied, in almost the same involuntary engrossment with the new idea of the baronet.

"Ah, then, I suppose it was an accident," he said, quickly. "However, we will not dwell any longer on so unpleasant a subject, Miss Desmond, as has occupied us to-day. I shall have some farther converse with Lord Oranmore, and also with Miss Vesci, before I decide on the best mode of preventing this impropriety occurring again; and meanwhile, you will be so good as to confine yourself to your own and my daughter's special apartments."

Thyra quietly listened to the blandly spoken words, but, if they in any degree modified her feelings, it was rather to turn anger into contempt than to appease it altogether.

"Pardon me, Sir Hilary," she said, "but for my own sake I cannot let this rest so quietly. I am so entirely innocent from the very vestige of wrong—except that I could not help some interest in the misfortunes of Lord Ashworth, to whom I owe my life in some measure, and that can be no cause for shame. I cannot stay here under such stain or ban. I came entirely at your prayer. I quitted the position I should probably have long held in Lady Maud's household, for your daughter's sake, and I am quite ready to go now that I find I cannot trust your kindness or your justice, and, as you say, it will be better, till it can be arranged for me to leave Rosanne, that I should remain in my own proper apartments, when Miss Vesci does not require my services."

Sir Hilary was fairly taken aback.

This helpless girl was too much for him to direct or to manage with his usual overbearing imperious-

ness. The calm dignity with which she took the initiative and turned the tables upon him was far more perplexing than her utmost anger could have proved.

The earnestness of her truth in stating the reason of her residence there, the allusion to her own reluctance to accept his earnest offer, was also the more galling, since it put him so entirely in the wrong, and yet he would not give way, more especially when dear and proud interests were at such an issue.

"I am responsible at any rate for your future plans and safety on leaving Rosanne, Miss Desmond," he said, coldly. "If you are of opinion that under the present circumstances it would be better for you to quit your situation, I certainly shall not oppose it; but I will make arrangements for you to go elsewhere on leaving Rosanne, instead of your being thrown on the world at your own will and pleasure."

Thyra bowed coldly.

She could not commit herself either refusing or accepting the offer till she had considered fairly all its consequences.

She had no taste for any kind of damsel errantry, and she knew perfectly that if she was about to leave Sir Hilary Vesci's home after the curt terms on which she had parted from Lady Maud, she would be most probably thrown destitute and homeless on the world.

And till she could think and organize her plans it was wiser for her to reserve her actions to the plans for her future could be fully arranged.

Sir Hilary seemed rather relieved by her silence; he rose nervously from his seat, and, stooping down to kiss and whisper a word to his daughter, he quickly passed from the room.

The lake maiden was about to follow his example when she was arrested by the broken accents of her young charge.

"Thyra," said the invalid, in a voice which spoke of tears, "Thyra, do not go—do not leave me in such anger."

"I am not angry, but I was grieved and disappointed," Miss Vesci answered the girl, returning for a moment to the side of the couch. "It is over now; I was very shocked and indignant, but I have conquered it, and I am only sad, very sad, so far as you are in question."

It was rather perplexing—for Erica Vesci's spirit had no little haughtiness in it—and she recoiled from the idea of submitting to an unknown dependent on her father's bounty and her own wayward fancy.

"You must allow that it was very strange and suspicious that you should do so, especially after I had told you what I did and trusted you where I could hardly have trusted my weakness to a sister," argued the invalid, in a wailing tone.

"No, I did nothing that ought to have made you blame me," replied the girl, firmly. "Nothing, Miss Vesci. I could not imagine that any one, and more especially a convalescent invalid, would be up at such an hour, and I longed for air and escape from my imprisonment. It is like caging a bird to keep me indoors day after day, when my whole life has been spent in such freedom," she added, impatiently, for her whole spirit was chafed at the renewed charge implied by Erica's words.

"Alas, alas! and cannot you feel for me then?" was the invalid's reply. "Have not I the same cause to complain—I, who spent half my time in fishing and riding and rambling about the hills? And now, Thyra, now I may never leave Rosanne save in a carriage—or," she added, plaintively, "in a hearse."

It was touching enough to prevail with a young and sensitive orphan was that powerful plea, but then it had been used before, and for nothing but such a result as this.

"I hope, I believe it may be otherwise, and from my very heart," she replied. "But it is only from an accidental hearsay, Miss Vesci, I cannot remain to see—it is impossible now."

"No, no; he will be gone soon, and then all will come back to the old ways," pleaded Erica. "You will not leave me ill and helpless?"

"I must; you have made it necessary. I cannot remain," returned Thyra, calmly. "It was believed once before that it would be so, and the first shock has broken the cord that bound us. I forgive it from my heart from you, my dear Miss Vesci," she went on, "but not from Sir Hilary. He has no excuse like you—none; and I can never trust again in common self-respect. I must depart."

Erica saw the quiet resolution that betrayed itself in every tone and look of her favourite, and her heart sank at the certainty of the impending farewell.

For the moment she repented all or nearly all her jealous folly.

But her heart was Lord Oranmore's, child girl that she might be in age. She was fully and most fatally devoted to her brother's friend and all other affec-



[A DECLARATION OF LOVE.]

tions and interests gave way under the pressure of that one deep love.

So Thyra left the room in sad and silent determination, and Erica laid her head on the pillow and wept in agony of spirit that could not be controlled.

Meanwhile Sir Hilary had rapidly taken his way to the unfrequented gallery that held the portraits of his ancestors, and, opening the door with a kind of nervous terror that seemed to forbid the very evil that he had most striven to avert, portraits seemed to gaze at him from their frames in grim or mocking omen.

There were dark-haired, dark-eyed matrons and maidens, who all seemed to assume the guise of his daughter or her companion.

There were knights in armour, cavaliers in courtly dress or ponderous robes, who had all transmitted their name and wealth in unbroken line to their children.

If the Vescis had never been a numerous and prolific family they had never been childless, so as to break the succession from father to son.

Calm and smiling and dignified, they looked on their descendant as if to reproach his folly or his injustice.

How had they managed in their day and generation to avoid the troubles he suffered?

It was but rational to suppose it.

The fathers and mothers hung round surrounded by their children, and none bore the impress of disappointing or of lowly birth that could have brought shame and sorrow on their heads.

It had been reserved for him, Hilary Vesci, to experience the grief and mortification.

The son had fallen in love with this orphan, nameless girl, and now she was actually and clandestinely stealing the hearts of those who might have recovered his darling Erica's happiness. It was intolerable, an injury that could not be borne, and his lips ground together in the one breathed cry:

"Yes, she must go, and she shall."

Must go, yes, in spite of Erica's health and the soothing benefit it had derived from the lake maiden's companionship. It must be risked rather than allow that upstart girl to triumph and his darling pine in solitary sadness.

But how and where could the parting be accomplished, and the unfortunate girl secured from any farther mischief?

That was still a new problem to be solved, and he could not altogether determine on it till one other doubt could be settled in his mind.

He passed through the gallery into that same room that Thyra had entered with the housekeeper, and, with trembling fingers, drew back the curtains which hung over Theresa Vesci's portrait.

It was a keen and searching look he bent on the long-unexamined features, and he bent down at length in a sort of frowning despair to take a nearer survey.

Was it sufficient to decide his wavering mind?

Perhaps, yes, perhaps the lingering and torturing doubts were somewhat disdainfully cast away from his feverish brain, for a deep frown gathered there as he gazed on the beautiful face of the Pariah from her house and her birthright.

There was one small and yet distinct and clear mark on the clear skin that brought a fancy to the breast of Hilary Vesci.

That beautiful woman was of his own blood, and the only sister of his father.

Yet she was unknown save by that disgraced portrait, her very fate kept a secret, and she was not sleeping with her kindred in the well-peopled vault of Rosanne.

She might have left husband and children, and they were strangers to their blood.

Hilary Vesci had been an only child, his own progeny were but confined to the son and daughter, who had both in their turn given him cause for grief and anxiety.

He had no other near kindred to console his sorrow or of supply the place of bereavement, or of other separation.

And there, death taken, but yet present with her old home and her own blood, to remind them of her existence, her wrongs, and her errors.

So he mused, in that strange hour of thought and self-blame, conscience-stricken it may be for the moment, but not with a repentance that brings life and redress of wrong.

He was about to banish from his doors one as young and lovely and more helpless and friendless than Theresa Vesci had ever been—and for what offence? Simply that she was too attractive, too fair, too fascinating for the eyes and hearts of others to look upon her with cold indifference.

In his heart the mature experience of the baronet knew this to be true; but he also knew, or he suspected, that the brilliant prospects of his son and the happiness of his daughter were at stake from this dangerous syren. And, justly or not, she must pay the penalty, and she must wander out on a world that those very charms would make more dangerous to her.

Ay, and there were other thoughts and other sus-

picious in his heart which perhaps added iron to the firm will where the unknown was concerned, and that determined him to take some yet more cautious action in the matter.

He was slowly replacing the portrait in its old position and preparing to leave the room when a quick step approached, and in another minute Mike Halloran approached in excited perturbation.

"Ah, and it's your honour I've been looking for in all the holes and corners of Rosanne, and never a shadow of your shoe-let could be seen, and now, worse luck, I've found your honour with that picture, which was never any good to the Vescis ever since she was born, as I've heard my poor mother say many a time," exclaimed the servitor.

"I don't know what nonsense you are talking, Mike," said the baronet, sternly, "or why you come to hunt out my movements like this. If you were not spoiled and privileged I should be inclined to turn you off for the insolence."

"Ah, and it's all nonsense, having your honour's presence, for any one to be so hard-hearted," replied the undaunted Mike. "I've my own opinion and thoughts as to what brought your honour here, and it's little wonder, since she's as like as two beans, and I thought so the moment I over sat eyes on her, your honour."

"I really cannot imagine what has seized you Mike; what nonsense you are talking," resumed the baronet, though he hastily passed through the door and locked it behind him as he spoke.

"Sure, and it's not your honour can be doubting what I mean," returned Mike. "Why, the purty young creature that is just come to nurse Miss Erica. Heaven, keep her safe and sound, is as like to this picture of Miss Theresa as if they had been sisters, or at the least mother and daughter, if ever such a thing could have happened to Miss Theresa, which I suppose never did, your honour; but—"

"Hold your tongue, or even your long services shall not protect you," said the old baronet, incensed at the confirmation of his own observations, "or else use it to some purpose, and tell me what induced you to intrude on me so rashly just now."

"Oh, and in truth, your honour, it was nothing common I was after when I took the liberty," said the man, perfectly undeterred by the threat; "it's your honour that is wanted to do your duty, and it would ill become a servitor of the Vescis not to tell your honour when it is a disgrace for you to be out of the way. It's the Lord Ashworth, who is come to give himself up to your honour's worhipful justice."

(To be continued.)



[THE DIAMOND BRACELET.]

# HE LOVES ME: HE LOVES ME NOT.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"Maurice Durant," "Fickle Fortune," "The Gipsy Peer," etc., etc.

## CHAPTER XIII.

Call you this vortex life? Where pain  
Walks hand in hand with mirth  
And laughter follows close on tears?

AFTER the lapse of a few minutes a small grated panel was drawn open in the dark door and a square of light was thrown upon the faces of Lord Ellsmere and Terence.

A man's head appeared at this, and an unpropitious face with one eye covered by a green patch presented itself.

"What do you want? who is it?"

"All right, Simons; it's I, Lord Ellsmere," was the reply.

The man echoed the gruff "all right," and immediately afterwards a bolt was withdrawn and a door opened slowly and cautiously.

Lord Ellsmere, taking Terence Vane by the arm, squeezed through; the door was shut again instantly, and Terence, looking round, found that they were standing in a little whitewashed passage lighted by a small naked flare of gas.

The porter whom Lord Ellsmere had addressed as Simons, after a short and sullen glance from his uncovered eye at Terence, dropped into a chair and resumed a pipe, which he had evidently laid down at their summons.

"House crowded, Simons?" asked Lord Ellsmere.

"Pretty full, my lord," growled the janitor. "Sport's begun some time."

"All right, we'll go in," said Lord Ellsmere; and, taking Terence's arm, he led him through the passage, and pushing open a dirty door entered a large room filled with tobacco smoke, hoarse laughter and an indescribable atmosphere of sawdust and stale beer.

The smoke was so dense that for the first few minutes Terence Vane could distinguish nothing.

But after he had become accustomed to the atmosphere and had wiped the tears from his eyes which a fit of coughing had produced he saw that he was in a large room lit by a number of flaming gas jets, and containing a row of plain deal tables and chairs placed in the form of a ring.

The laughter and the talking proceeded from the occupants of these chairs, who with sundry pots and glasses before them, and with long and short pipes in their mouths, were engaged in eagerly watching and criticizing some performance that was going on in a sort of pit in the centre of the circle formed by the tables.

On a raised platform was another table, at which were seated three men, one a burly, red-faced individual with small, bloodshot eyes and thick lips. He held a small hammer in his hand such as that used by a chairman of a convivial meeting.

The other two men bore a strong likeness to the chairman in the matter of colour, neck, and general expression.

They held stumpy pencils and were engaged in making some notes on two dirty pieces of paper.

The spectators round the ring were of a mixed character, from the costermonger to the sporting lord, but bull necks, blue neckerchiefs and mangy far caps predominated.

As the chairman recognized Lord Ellsmere he nodded with the nearest approach to a smile his face could manage and greeted him with:

"How d'ye do, my lord?"

"Ah, Bently, still alive," returned Lord Ellsmere.

"How's the game?"

"Make room there for a noble sportsman!" shouted the chairman, hoarsely, with a knock of the hammer, and the ring was broken to allow Lord Ellsmere to enter.

A small group of gentlemen were standing looking on, and Lord Ellsmere greeted several of them.

"Here's a young friend of mine come to see some sport," he said, drawing Vane forward. "Ever seen ratting before, Terry?"

Terence shook his head, and, looking over a man's shoulder, saw that the great attraction was a small pit, covered with sawdust, in which a dozen rats were rushing madly about, some leaping half way up the boards which enclosed the pit, others scratching holes in the sawdust, and all evidently very uncomfortable.

Two or three men holding terriers under their arms stood near the edge of the pit, and some sport was evidently about to commence.

"Now, then," shouted the chairman, banging the table, "who's the next dawg?"

One of the men held up one of the terriers, and a silence profound ensued.

"Show him round, Tommy," said the chairman, and the man walked round towards Ellsmere and his companions and submitted the "dawg" for inspection.

Lord Ellsmere handled him with the air of a connoisseur and nodded approvingly.

"A very nice little dog," he said. "Terry, here's a good specimen of a terrier."

Terence Vane looked with due gravity, and the dog was returned to his owner.

"This is a rat-pit then," Terence Vane whispered to Lord Ellsmere.

"Yes," said Lord Ellsmere. "Ever seen one before?"

"No," said Terence. "I thought public ratting was prohibited by Act of Parliament?"

"So it is," retorted Lord Ellsmere, "but these gentlemen don't trouble to send a notice of their meetings to the House."

"But the police?" said Terence Vane.

"Surely—"

"Hush!" said Lord Ellsmere, "don't speak the word here. Look, they are going to drop him in."

Terence looked and saw the man drop the terrier into the pit amidst a profound silence.

The rats saw him coming and rushed about more madly than before.

For a moment the plucky little fellow stood and looked at his natural enemies, then quick as lightning he pounced on one rat and tossed him over his head, then another and another.

Some of the rats showed fight and flew at him, but the little dog always met them with his sharp teeth and tossed them up, until suddenly a roar of satisfaction and applause shook the room, and Terence, looking round the pit, saw that every rat was dead, and the terrier, erect and quivering with excitement, was looking to see if there were any more.

"Bravo!" said Lord Ellsmere. "There's pluck, Terry! Every one of those long-tailed gentlemen had longer and sharper teeth than master doggy and could get round quicker, but where are they?"

"Bravo!"

The gentlemen clapped their hands and a second volley of applause arose as the owner of the dog lifted his little conqueror from the battle-field.

Then, as if the exhibition had rendered every man in the room thirsty, cries for beer and spirits arose.

Two or three men hurried round with pots and cans and the chairman banged the table and shouted:

"Orders, gentlemen! Orders—give your orders!"

Several bottles of champagne were brought to a table near Lord Ellsmere and his friends, and the popping of corks mingled with the Babel of tongues now let loose in criticism of, and arguments upon, the day's performance.

At another time Terence Vane would have viewed the whole affair with disgust, for he was a gentlemanly boy, but the glamour of Lord Ellsmere's

mere and novelty was upon him and he had partaken of a great deal of wine.

More was now pressed upon him and, excited and off his balance, he accepted it eagerly.

It was sweet common champagne, and it soon took effect upon him.

He was conscious of a man coming round with a hat to collect some money and then all was lost to him.

"Hallo!" exclaimed Lord Ellmere, "this youngster has dropped off to sleep. That last bottle was one too many for him."

The men laughed, and a young marquis, who had "seen life," put up his eyeglass and stared at the sleeping Terence with vast amusement.

"Green at this sort of thing, eh?" he drawled. "Yes," said Lord Ellmere. "He had had a lot of wine before he came here. 'What shall I do with him?'"

"Take him into the next room," suggested some one, and Lord Ellmere, acting upon the advice, called one of the men to help him carry Terence.

The next room was somewhat smaller in appearance to the first one, though smaller and used for a different purpose.

There were tables in it, covered with dark green cloth, one large table in the middle having a range of six appliances fitted on its surface.

At present this smaller room was tolerably empty, but immediately the tables should be covered some of the audience would crowd into it and take to various games of gambling.

Already there were some distinguishable-looking rascals playing all sorts of dominoes and throwing dice.

Ellmere carried Terence to a distant part of the room and deposited him on a bench in the corner, then he removed his watch and chain, and rings and, covering him with an overcoat, left him.

As he passed out of the room again into the larger one another stock of rats was being emptied into the pit and a man with a most villainous countenance and an arm in a sling was snatching at the ceremony.

Lord Ellmere passed up to the pit and nudged familiarly to the new-comer.

The terrier was introduced, the rats were killed, more beer was consumed and that part of the evening's amusement concluded.

A great many of the spectators took their departure, others sat together in groups to chatter and argue, and sometimes to quarrel, and not a few repaired to the other room where the tables were ready to receive them.

Lord Ellmere, a gambler at heart, who would play pitch halfpenny with a sweep if no higher sort of gaming were at hand, strolled in with the rest and, taking up a dice-box, called out:

"Who'll throw a main?"

"I don't mind, guv'nor," replied the man with the injured arm.

"Oh, you're flush, are you, Slodger? Come along then, and here's luck to both of us."

And he drained a glass of champagne.

The man addressed as Slodger sat down, and the two well-mated though apparently widely different men fell to.

Dicing is perhaps the most vicious and exciting form of gaming.

Lord Ellmere revelled in it, and greatly so to-night, for luck was with him, and before many hours had passed he had won all his opponent's bill, and half a sovereign to boot.

"Curse my luck!" muttered the Slodger. "I'm cramped, guv'nor!"

"That's a pity," said Lord Ellmere, with a cool laugh. "Luck was just on the turn, my friend; depend on it if you had had another crown, you'd have come off the winner."

"But I ain't," retorted the man.

Lord Ellmere laughed again and toyed with the dice.

The man watched him with evilly longing eyes for some minutes, then he said suddenly, throwing something on the table as he spoke, and taking it up again as if reluctant to part with it:

"Look here, what do you reckon this worth, guv'nor? I ain't got any coin. But this is good for something—a tidy lump, too!"

Lord Ellmere's sharp little eyes flashed at the article which he saw was a bracelet.

"Let me look at it," he said, carelessly.

"Here; keep it quiet though," whispered the Slodger, huskily.

Lord Ellmere took it, and a gleam of recognition passed across his face.

"A bracelet—pretty little thing. Where did you get it, Slodger?"

"Found it," retorted the Slodger, gruffly.

"Hah! hah!" laughed Lord Ellmere, softly. "Very good, excellent! Found it, of course, and it wasn't lost before you'd taken it, eh? Very good! Capital! Now then, be candid, Slodger; where did you get it?"

"I picked it up," said the man, grimly. "Never mind where I come by it. It's good enough to play for, ain't it?"

"Oh, yes; worth a five-pound note I should say," said Lord Ellmere, calmly, and holding the bracelet tightly. "But I want to know where you got it. Come, Slodger, as you won't tell me, suppose I tell you? Hah, my friend, you didn't think I should know this pretty little thing directly I saw it, eh?"

"Come, suppose we say it belonged to a tall, dark young lady, with thick, handsome eyebrows, who lives—where—let me see—ah, yes, Kensington. Ah!" he added, with quiet triumph, as the Slodger dashed his hand upon the table with an oath.

"Who told you, guv'nor? How did you?"

"Never mind," said Lord Ellmere. "Of course you're delighted to have found the owner, Slodger? Oh, yes, I'll take it back, with your compliments. You found it—where did you say?"

"Come, stop all this cursed nonsense!" snarled the footman. "You know all about it I dare say; and you'll know more before long. I can tell you. I ain't forgot him and I'll pay him back for this! I'll teach my fine gentleman to go a free shooting! Chiss him!"

"Oh, eh?" said Lord Ellmere. "There's a gentleman in the case, is there? Come, Slodger, he continued, dropping his tone of banter and leaning forward so that he might speak in a low, persuasive voice. "Well, don't all this nonsense of course you stole the bracelet and its young right enough. It was only my duty about returning it. Hah, tell me all about it. You've got your arm in a sling; accident connected with this, eh?" and he tapped the bracelet.

The Slodger nodded sulkily, then, in hoarse undertone, he proceeded to relate the stealing of the bracelet and the effective way which Edgar had put to further planning.

"Curse him, just on my hand was on the diamond necklace—a sparkle it was too!—I saw a flash and felt the ball come grinding into my arm. Course, I turned up the game and ran for it. But I can tell you before I went, skulking over the wall and hiding myself about as if he was a cat with nine lives. He'll have to have 'one to bump clear' what I've got for him!" he ended, threateningly.

"Oh, you saw him, did you?" said Lord Ellmere. "What was he like? Can you describe him?"

"A young chap, a regular swell, like you, guv'nor, only proud and better looking—no offence—he was as straight as one of them guards, and the way he came off the balcony and over that wall was terrible!"

"Off the balcony? What of the next home?"

"In course!" retorted the Slodger, irritably.

"Didn't I say he took aim from the balcony and hit me in the arm?"

"By heavens!" murmured Lord Ellmere. "Edgar Raven! I see. And there was no pursuit, no 'stop thief,' nor the rest of it?"

"Not a bit of it," said the Slodger. "I got clean away without any trouble whatsoever."

"Hem!" said Lord Ellmere, musing. "Well, Slodger, what are you going to do with the bracelet? I'll give you five pounds for it here and now, and I'll put you up to getting your revenge on the young gentleman who gave you that game arm."

"Wot d'ye mean?" asked the Slodger, sulkily.

"See here," said Lord Ellmere, bending forward and lowering his voice. "You say you want to have a reckoning for that little bullet. Now, the way you are going about it is all wrong! What you want to do is to wait for the gentleman on a dark night and give him a crack on the head or a stab in the back—and very proper ambition too. But doesn't it occur to you that he may turn and catch you at it, or that some one or some chance may happen to balk you? See, Slodger? I'm afraid you stand to get the worst of it at that game. It's risky, to say the least. You may pay him back, but if you do you stand the chance of seven years across the herring pond. Now what you want is something that will hit him harder than a life preserver and yet free you from all risks, eh, Slodger?"

The man turned quickly and nodded ferociously. "That's it, guv'nor," he replied, hoarsely. "You swells is so quick!"

"You understand? Now, suppose I say to you, 'Slodger, I want to wait upon this same gentleman and find out all I can about him and the young lady he so generously and bravely protected,' and suppose I say, 'Slodger, we will work together. You shall dog 'em and find out all about them and their little games, and when we see the moment to drop upon them we'll do it together and with a will. Suppose I say that, what do you say, Slodger? Do you go with me?'"

"Ah! that I do, guv'nor," exclaimed the man, with an emphatic oath and outstretched hand.

"Very good," said Lord Ellmere, with a cool nod and utter disregard of the hand. "Then, to begin with, here's the five pounds for the bracelet. I

shan't part with it, Slodger, don't fear. And now drop in here of an evening, and when I want you I'll come for you. Hush! here's some one coming to the next table. You understand? Dog 'em day and night if you can!"

Mr. Slodger nodded, dropped the five sovereigns in his pocket and the game proceeded as if there had been no interruption.

#### CHAPTER XIV.

This organ shall discourse such sweet music

That the very bulls with wondrous delight

Drop silently to listen. Falconer.

When Lord Ellmere was amiably conspiring against Mr. Raven, that gentleman was pacing his studio, with his favourite pipe in his mouth, filled with supreme happiness. He had ridden home in Valeria Temple's brougham! And not only sat opposite her, and near enough to touch her had he stretched forth his hand, but had also experienced the delight of a young and beautiful woman's smile.

For the first time Valeria had smiled at him with something more kindly than mere cold indifference.

Yes, Edgar Raven was moved to a strange feeling of pleasure, and as was his wont, he was trying to analyse that emotion and to explain it.

He would not admit to himself that he was in love with the strange, beautiful creature—no, not in love, but interested.

"I can't be in love with her," he murmured, with a guess but rather doubtful shake of the head. "Not in love with her, but only interested; a very warm interest it must be, for I never felt so engrossed in any subject before! Why should I, Edgar Raven—who have seen many beautiful women, who have never yet felt that kind of interest, feel it now so strongly when a girl beautiful indeed, but cold as ice to me, reveals one smile? I do hope that I am not drifting into danger. I am poor, I have sworn never to wed, there is no chance that Valeria Temple—how sweet her name sounds!—will ever deign to bestow a thought on me! It would be madness to let the same interest grow into hot love—for hot love it would be, I should love madly if I loved at all. No, if I feel that I am being carried down the current I will get to dry land and seek safety in flight."

"Perhaps I had better go now," he mused. Then he added with that weakness which is so human and so self-deceptive:

"No, I will finish the picture at least, and then if I think it wise to fly from the fascination of a smile from those dark eyes, I can go. It is strange, but since I have known her that restlessness which made me a Wandering Jew has vanished! I never stayed so long in one place before as I have done here!"

Then he knocked the ashes from his pipe and snatched off to bed, humming the song which Valeria had sung that evening. It was another evidence of his "warm interest," all Valeria's songs haunted him, and he hummed them while he was at work or at rest.

To his great disgust the following morning was a wet one.

He rose, took his cold bath in a most unamiable humour, and grumbled through his breakfast as an Englishman does when he is disappointed or out of humour.

Could he go to Valeria with the rain pouring down in torrents and ask her to sit under a dripping oak?

No; but the thought occurred to him that he could make another sketch, and quite brightened by the idea, he brushed his old painting-jacket, which must have been extremely astonished at such extraordinary attention, and appeared in the drawing-room, where Valeria and Madame Leclaire were sitting, the former idly reclining in a huge chair, the latter at her usual piece of needlework.

Most women would have risen, with some slight embarrassment, but Valeria's face showed not a whit of discomposure, and as she held her hand out she scarcely raised her head.

"I am watching the rain, Mr. Raven," she said, "and rejoicing in the reflection that I shall not be expected to sit in any given attitude for a fixed time."

"I am sorry to have to scatter that sense of satisfaction," he replied, in the same vein. "I have come to ask you to let me take a stretch."

"What, another?" she said, with upraised eyebrows. "I thought you were so satisfied with the first one."

Edgar, thus self-convicted, smiled.

"It is always best to be satisfied with nothing in art. Perhaps another sketch may excel even the first."

"I will consent only on one condition—that I may choose my own position."

"I agree," he said, readily, and laughing.

"I choose this," she said, with grave ingenuousness. "It is so comfortable."

"That be it," said Edgar. "And now I'll get my canvas."

He brought his easel and arranged it. Madame Leclaire chattering meanwhile over the party of the preceding night.

"Miss Armitage's parties are always so successful," she said. "One is sure to be amused and benefited."

"Some are," said Edgar, dryly, thinking of Terence Vane.

"Yes," said Madame Leclaire, innocently, "and the gentlemen especially. Miss Armitage is so anxious that you should not be what men called 'bored,' and always manages that you shall have your whist or some card game or other. So kind and thoughtful of her!"

"Very," said Edgar, slowly, and still thinking of Terence, and not of himself. "And yet she does not like cards," said Edgar, "and never plays."

"Oh, indeed, yes!" said Madame Leclaire, with mild astonishment. "Selina Armitage plays a better hand at whist than any lady I know, and at any other game in which cards are used. She is remarkably quick and fortunate, too!"

Edgar paused, with his brush in his hand, to stare with thoughtful astonishment, and happened to catch Valeria's eye, which was fixed on him with a half-scornful expression.

"You were mistaken or misinformed, Mr. Raven?" she asked, in her sweet, low voice.

"Misinformed," replied Edgar, as carefully as he could, and he resumed his painting.

"Why should Miss Armitage tell me that falsehood?" he asked himself, and he could find no answer.

"Am I permitted to see the sketch?" asked Valeria, who seemed to be in a less serious mood than usual.

"Yes, I think so, as it is only a sketch," said Edgar, and he carried the canvas to her.

"Oh, I ought to have risen," she said. "Do you remember that a certain king did not disdain to pick up an artist's brush?"

"Yes, a king," said Edgar; "but not a queen."

"That is sharp repartee, and very gallant," she said, with a smile. "But the sketch is like me, I think. It lacks something. My mouth is larger than you have painted it, and I do not smile so much."

"You are smiling this moment," said Edgar, looking down on her with an admiration which he found it hard to conceal.

"Am I?" she said, with an expression of self-examination. "I think I am. The rain has made me feel sleepy and indolent. Mr. Raven, do you not sing or play?"

"Only a little, a very miserable little."

"I wish you would sing something," she said. "I long for some music, but I am too indolent to make it."

"Doing for us, Mr. Raven?" said Madame Leclaire. "It will be so kind of you to amuse us this eve evening."

"I am afraid to," said Edgar, laughing. "How can I sing in this room, which your magnificent voice has so often filled, and how can you ask me to, Madame Leclaire, when you can hear Miss Temple for the asking? Besides, I must not follow your example, Miss Temple. I must not leave my work."

"Sing at it then! all labour is made sweeter by music," said Valeria.

"But not by gruff creaking," said Edgar. "But I will obey; here is something foreign and suited to the morning."

And, in a rich baritone, he commenced an Italian chant, full and sonorous, with a regular rhythmical music in it like the ripple of water broken by an oar.

Valeria listened, with faint surprise; she did not know the "good-natured Mr. Raven" had a good voice in addition to an obliging disposition and a handsome face.

Working still, and with a well-bred and self-unconsciousness, Edgar sang through his song, and then stepped back to look at his sketch.

"Oh, Mr. Raven," said Madame Leclaire, "why did you not tell us that you had so fine a voice, and could sing so well?"

"Because that would have been a gross exaggeration," said Edgar. "I haven't a fine voice, and I can't sing even passably, but I am fond of music and have a tolerable ear and memory, so when a song pleases me I can generally imitate it—like a parrot, and about as harmoniously."

"And what song was that?" asked Valeria. "It was very pretty and fascinating."

"It is an Italian song," said Edgar.

"Where did you hear it?" asked Valeria. "It sounds something like the rough-time-keeping tunes English sailors sing, does it not?"

"Yes," said Edgar. "It is a boatman's song. The gondoliers sing it while they fit through the canals. I heard it in Venice."

At the word, which he had pronounced with some reluctance, Valeria's whole attitude and expression changed.

It was as if the word had recalled her to herself, and a sense of duty or pain.

The smiling content which Edgar had spoken of vanished from her face, the indolent, graceful attitude, so full of repose, changed to the old thoughtful, restless pose, and the dark eyebrows gathered over the eyes with the singular look of abstraction and reflection.

Edgar noticed the change and marvelled at it.

"Venice," she said, or rather breathed, "I should like to see it. Did you live there long?"

"Yes," he said; "so long I grew tired of the place. It is very beautiful—too beautiful, and very dreary."

Then he changed the subject, almost abruptly.

"Can I not prevail upon you to sing?" he said.

Valeria did not move or speak. She was evidently wrapped in one of her fits of abstraction, and did not hear him.

Edgar put the question again, and she moved towards her harp, half-mechanically, and sang for them in a low, sweet and almost weird voice, which so moved Edgar that all thanks died on his lips.

There was a profound silence for a few moments, which he—almost uncomfortable under it—broke by saying:

"Speaking of music—or rather thinking of it—are you going to the grand concert at Lambrook House, Miss Temple?"

"No, I have not heard of it," murmured Valeria, touching the harp strings softly as she spoke.

"Indeed!" he said. "They were talking of it at dinner yesterday, but you were so engaged with Lord Ellsmere that possibly you did not hear them. It is a grand concert the Duchess of Tremaine is getting up on behalf of one of the charitable institutions."

"All the world is going, I believe, and wisely, for there will be some good music and some good musicians."

Valeria still toyed with her harp, but her face had suddenly expressed an interest in his words.

"The great German maestro, Herr Wilhelm, is the conductor, and he is securing all the best talent in London. I think you would like to hear some of the selections, Miss Temple."

"When is it to take place?" asked Valeria, with assumed indifference.

"This day week, I think—no, this day fortnight," he corrected. "If you would permit me to do so I should be so happy to get you tickets," he added, passionately.

Valeria shook her head.

"Thank you," she said, absently. "Madame would you like to go?"

But Madame Leclaire would not express her wishes without first hearing Valeria's, and the matter was dropped, and apparently forgotten.

Only, apparently, for as Edgar, who found that Valeria's strange abstraction had returned to her, put aside his easel, and took up his cap, she said:

"And Herr Wilhelm is a German composer?"

"Yes," he said, "they have engaged him, and brought him over from Germany especially for this affair, so they said last night. You must remember," he added, with a smile, "I am only repeating the gossip I heard between the fish and the eels. The dowager was full of the subject, and even favoured us with the great man's address."

"Which you have forgotten?" said Valeria, with a smile, which hid a great eagerness.

"Which I have forgotten," laughed Edgar. "No," he added, suddenly, "I have not. It was 19, Connaught Terrace," and, laughing, he held out his hand.

"I am afraid I have tired you beyond endurance. Can you forgive me?"

Valeria placed her slender hand in his strong one, and looked up at him with a questioning, almost troubled look.

"Madame says you are good-natured," she said, in a low voice. "You are wise; you are as patient and as good-tempered as a woman, I think, Mr. Raven, and I know," she murmured, almost inaudibly, as he bent over her hand and hurried away, "that you are as brave as a lion."

When Madame Leclaire returned to the room Valeria had gone up to her boudoir, and in a few minutes sent down a message.

Miss Temple's love, and would Madame be kind enough not to wait dinner if Miss Temple did not come down.

Madame Leclaire had grown too accustomed to the variable disposition of the girl she was growing to love to be surprised, and when the dinner was served she went to it alone.

Meanwhile, Valeria was in her dressing-room with the door locked, and the great box which contained the bundle, so valorously carried about by Elfy, open before her.

An hour later, and Madame Leclaire saw a lady, something of Valeria's size, but a fuller figure and fair hair, pass across the lawn.

Madame, concluding that it was some visitor to the servants, or perhaps a dressmaker of Valeria's, took but little notice of the stranger, and resumed her embroidery.

The lady of Valeria's height, when she had got clear of the house and lawn, changed her slow and deliberate step for a quicker one, and leaving the quiet street for the more crowded thoroughfare, called a cab.

"Where to, miss?" asked the cabman, as he shut the door.

"No 19, Connaught Terrace," was the reply, and the cabman got on to his box and started his horse.

The lady pulled up the veil which she had kept covered over her face while in the street, and, with compressed lips, sat with folded hands, half-trying to maintain an unnatural calm and composure.

In due time the cab stopped at No. 19, Connaught Terrace, and the lady alighted.

"Shall I wait, miss?" asked the cabman.

The lady replied in the negative, and, handing him his fare and a satisfactory amount over, ascended the steps and rang the bell.

Of the servant who answered it she asked if Herr Wilhelm was at home.

"Yes, will you wait in, if you please?" was the reply, and the lady was shown into an ante-room.

"What name shall I say?" asked the servant.

"Marian Earle," said the lady and the man, with a respectful bow, departed.

Directly the servant had gone the lady looked round the room, and took a chair which was so placed that the light fell at the back of her and not on her face.

Scarcely had she so seated herself than the door opened and Herr Wilhelm entered.

He bowed.

"Mademoiselle Earle?" he said, in English, with a German accent.

The lady inclined her head.

"Am I addressing Herr Wilhelm?" she said, in a low voice.

"My name is Wilhelm, and I shall be proud to be of any service to mademoiselle."

Then the lady explained the purpose of her visit.

She had learnt that Herr Wilhelm was to give a grand concert that day fortnight and she had applied to him for any vacancy he might have for a vocalist.

The composer listened with his head bent on one side and beating time to her words with one small nervous hand.

"Yes," he said, "mademoiselle has not been misinformed. I do give a concert on that date, and I have several vacancies; but mademoiselle's name is new to me and many celebrated artists are engaged, and, with all deference and respect for mademoiselle, only first-class voices could be engaged."

"I partly expected that would be the case," replied the lady, "and I have come humbly to present myself for Herr Wilhelm's criticism and approval."

The composer rose, with a polished bow, and opened the lid of a grand piano.

"Has mademoiselle brought any music with her?"

The lady produced a music-roll and, untying it, took out some music, which she handed to the composer. Herr Wilhelm looked at it and then looked at the lady candidate.

"This is difficult music," he said, "and requires a good voice and great art to render it properly."

"I know it," said the lady, rather sadly. "It would not have been fair or honourable to bring less difficult pieces for trial, seeing that such difficult music was to be sung at the concert."

"Very true; mademoiselle's sentiment does honour to her heart," said Herr Wilhelm. "If mademoiselle pleases she will try this air from the opera of 'Faust.'"

The lady signified her consent, and the composer seating himself at the piano commenced the accompaniment.

For a moment the lady seemed overpowered with nervousness, but, as if with a strong effort, she overcame her dire oppression and commenced the song. At the first bar Herr Wilhelm raised his head slightly. As the song proceeded and the singer grew unconscious of everything save the divine music, which poured from her lips clear and sweet as a bell, the German master's cheeks flushed and his eyes sparkled, and as the last note rose—was prolonged, then died away in a splendid burst of melody, he sprang from the stool and stared at her.

The lady sank into the chair with her back to the light, and sat with tightened lips and throbbing heart.

"Mademoiselle!" he exclaimed, "who are you?" "I am unknown; my name is—Earle," replied the lady with some hesitation and embarrassment. "I trust—"

"It is magnificent!" exclaimed the composer. "Surely mademoiselle must be jesting when she says that she is unknown!"

"No, indeed, this is the first time I shall have sung in public—professionally," replied the lady; adding coldly, "if Herr Wilhelm should engage me!"

"Engage you!" exclaimed the professor. "I should be only too honoured, too enraptured to introduce such a great—so sweet a voice to the world. Mademoiselle, favour me with your address! You must practise those songs! They will suit your voice—your magnificent voice admirably! Practise them, Mademoiselle, I beg, night and day, and I will promise you such a success as shall exceed your most sanguine expectations! Cast nervousness away, forget everything as you did just now and you will carry everything by storm! Never can I believe! Unknown! Mademoiselle, your address."

The lady took a card from her case, on which was written:

"MARION EARLE,

"(Care of Mr. Poppleschick),

"Curry Street,

"Soho."

"A letter addressed thus will reach me, sir," she said, "at any time."

Herr Wilhelm bowed as gratefully as if she had handed him a five-pound note.

"And mademoiselle will come here to rehearse twice a week? On Mondays and Fridays, at four o'clock. These are the songs; practise, I implore you—but, there, I can trust all to mademoiselle's exquisite taste and judgment."

The lady rose and, thanking him, was passing out of the door into the hall when the composer delicately hinted that she had forgotten something.

"Mademoiselle has made no inquiries as to the fee!" he said.

"I thought that an amateur received none," exclaimed the lady.

"Such amateurs as mademoiselle are not so insulted," said the composer. "If mademoiselle will deign to receive twenty guineas, I shall be proud and delighted to hand them to her."

Again the lady thanked him, and then, with an exchange of bows, they parted, the composer accompanying her to the door, with the most marked respect and admiration.

To be continued.

## MY KING.

I LOVE my fellow-creatures—no woman ever loved her fellow-creatures better than I do, but in the middle of a summer afternoon I love them at a distance.

It was the middle of a summer afternoon, and Mr. Cornwell would not keep at a distance. He insisted upon walking close by me and whispering. What he was saying was this:

"I think I prefer mountain-scenery to any other; in the first place," etc. All of which, from the first place to the last, might have been proclaimed upon the house-tops and no one the worse or the better for it.

"How warm it is!" I said, making a wide space between us. Mr. Cornwell filled it immediately. "Shall I fan you?" he asked, with an amiable smile.

I like people to understand things without having to put them in plain black and white, and I came very near making a demonstration. But I only said, with great dignity:

"No, thank you, I don't like to be fanned, and I wish I had left my fan at home."

"Allow me to carry it for you," said Mr. Cornwell, seizing it gently. Of course I could not struggle with him, so I let him take it. Then he said—but I will not repeat what he said.

"What a goose you are!" I thought. Now when a woman thinks that a man is a goose, and has reasons to believe that he is trying to "make love" to her, politeness becomes one of the highest Christian virtues. I practised it by remaining silent.

Mr. Cornwell did not understand my silence, for he repeated his remark, with the addition of a sigh.

This was aggravating in the extreme, for we were nearly a mile away from the hotel, and there was no telling what he might say during that mile. I must change the subject.

"Don't you think it would be cooler on the other

side of the road?" I asked. "The rocks reflect the heat so much."

If you will believe it, Mr. Cornwell made his speech for the third time! The manner thereof was slightly altered, but the matter was one and the same. I was roused at last.

"Mr. Cornwell," I began. But my oration was nipped in the bud. My foot slipped upon a smooth rock, and I went down like—like one hundred and twenty pounds, which is my weight. It did not hurt me in the flesh, but the spirit grieved exceedingly. I was not afraid of the sea, for, like the dear gazelle, I knew me well, and loved me; and I loved it with an assured love, for I knew it would not die before me. But, put yourself in my place, standing ankle-deep in the water, with your lower limbs submerged, and your equilibrium seriously endangered. How would you feel?

Mr. Cornwell felt very bad only to look at me.

"Are you hurt, Miss Isabella? What can I do for you?" he asked, imploringly.

Then it suddenly occurred to him that perhaps I might wish to return to my native land. While assisting me to do so he happened to think of Venus arising from the sea. I thought of something entirely different, but I would not let my angry passions rise till I stood once more on terra-firma.

But then, when I looked at myself, and saw, and beheld, I knew that forgiveness was my duty, and peace my salvation. I could not return to the hotel, in broad daylight, looking as I did.

I trembled at the thought of Mrs. Grundy, sitting on the wide piazza and greeting me with that stony smile, those bitter-sweet glances! I knew too well how, in the bosom of her elective family, she would pick me to pieces, and putting two and two, maliciously, together, find that they made six.

It is written for our encouragement that "while there is life there is hope." Being encouraged thereby, I tuned my dulcet pipes, and said, maliciously:

"Mr. Cornwell, will you do me a great favour?"

Mr. Cornwell was ready to do or die.

"Would you be so kind as to go to the hotel, and ask my cousin Matilda to bring me my kid boots, and my black over-skirt? She must bring them herself, and come alone. And you must not say a word about it to anybody, because people would laugh at me, and I can't bear to be laughed at. Will you, please?"

It is not in the nature of mortal man to resist the entreating voice of woman. Benevolence is man's strongest weakness, and his best. Yet he is so unconscious of this moral beauty, that he often spoils it by over-doing.

Mr. Cornwell was willing to go, but he was also willing to come back.

"Please do not do that," I begged. "And perhaps it would be safer to go through the woods, so that no one would see you."

Mr. Cornwell yielded, and departed.

I sat on a predestined log, near the edge of the wood, and dried myself, peacock fashion, while I admired the landscape.

For nearly two hours I was as patient as the Monument. Then I got tired of it, and, having discovered in my pocket the remains of a pencil, I scribbled on my fan. "When this you see, remember Mr. C." For my angry passions, so long repressed, were rising in spite of my patience. Why didn't Matilda come? And, why, oh, why, had I boasted of being a good walker, and accepted Mr. Cornwell's escort? I would never forgive him—never!

There was some comfort in that, but it was the only comfort I had. The sun went down, and the dew of night fell fast; but no human form divine approached the place of my exile. If I had not sent for Matilda, I might have gone on my way rejoicing, but she would probably come after supper, and I must wait for her.

So I waited till I could wait no more. It was a beautiful night. The moon was rising behind the woods, and, inspired by the calm and poetry of nature, I started on my homeward journey. I had not gone far when I heard a rustling among the bushes on the shady side of the road. I stopped, and waited.

"Miss Isabella," whispered the evening breeze, "The voice was the voice of Mr. Cornwell, and that gentleman once more stood before me. I was so glad that he was not someone else that I forgot I was angry with him. In his arms were two parcels; a brown one, and a white one."

"Where is Matilda?" I asked. "Did she request you to bring me these things?"

"No. I have not seen her. I am very sorry I made you wait so long, but I lost my way in the woods; and when I came to the grove, near the hotel, all the young people were starting on that moonlight picnic they were talking about yesterday; and I knew that your cousin was going, because Mr. Smith was there. So I waited, and laid my plan. When everybody had gone down to supper I rushed into the house, and—I hope you will forgive me,

but I took the liberty of entering your room and, seeing a pair of boots on the floor, I wrapped them up in a newspaper, and here they are. Then I went out like a shadow, and, as I thought you might be hungry, I bought a pound of biscuits; and here they are too."

Poor Mr. Cornwell! he looked so tired, so penitent, so happy, that I could only laugh and be thankful. I did not need the boots any more, but the biscuits were welcome.

We sat on the rocks and had a delightful little picnic on moonlight and nonsense; but as it was not sentimental nonsense I enjoyed it. We partook of a few biscuits, and used the rest to make silver rings in the sea. Finally, we went home, to all human appearances the best friends in the world. Near the hotel I took the boot-parcel, and, leaving Mr. Cornwell to his fate, I ran up the back stairs and reached my room without any further misadventure.

I was sound asleep when Matilda returned; but, on second thought, I deemed it best to wake up.

"Where have you been this afternoon?" she asked. "We rode up to the North Point, and had a most delightful time."

"Did you?" I answered, sleepily. "I took my walk, and came back again just in time to miss the picnic."

Then I closed my eyes, and repented. Alas! I was soon to learn how hard is the way of the transgressor.

The next day was Sunday. My aunt had a headache, and did not go down to breakfast, and I was much relieved to find, by one of her remarks, that she believed I had joined the moonlight excursion. It was an innocent delusion, and I did not attempt to undeceive her.

Matilda and I went down to our morning meal, and met my beloved cousin Tom in the hall.

The moment I looked at him I saw he was up to mischief. "His eyes" so sparkled with a lively flame "that I cast mine down and put on my Sunday look."

"Good morning, ladies," he said, affectionately. "You are as fresh as roses. I know how Matilda feels, but—"

"We want our breakfast, Tom," said Matilda.

"So do I. I have been waiting for you. I wished to be the first to congratulate Belle—"

"Don't be silly, Tom," I said, politely.

"Oh, it is to be kept secret, is it? It is too bad! Everybody knows it already. But I congratulate you all the same."

We entered the dining-room, and sat at our adopted table. I unfolded my napkin and desired a cup of coffee; then I looked up. The Grundy family was all before me, where to choose. I gazed at them collectively; they gazed at me individually. I smiled vaguely; they smiled back with a meaning. There was not much in it; but I am not made of brass, and I blushed. I was defeated, so far. But while I buttered my toast I vowed a vow—and kept it.

I would scorn running away from the enemy, so, after breakfast, I betook myself to the piazza to see what manner of a day it was.

"I hope you had a pleasant walk yesterday," said Aunt Grundy, sweetly.

"Very pleasant, thank you," with equal sweetness.

"I fear you are too tired to attend the sanctuary, my dear," suggested a benevolent Mrs. Grundy.

Happily Mr. Cornwell appeared upon the scene, and Mrs. Grundy subsided.

The rest of the day was in my favour. Mrs. Grundy's devotion is apt to make her sleepy in the afternoon.

But when softly the light of day fades upon her sight she resumes the cares and duties of her arduous profession.

At that soft twilight hour I happened to cross the parlour, and at that same moment Mrs. Grundy began to sing:

"Oh, happy day, that fixed my choice."

Her voice might have been better, but I am so fond of vocal music that I stopped and listened till she had done; then I went to the piano.

"It is a lovely hymn," I said, "and it always reminds me of my grandmother. She used to sing me to sleep with it."

Which was perfectly true.

"I think you might have told me, I told you," said Matilda, when we were alone in our room.

"Told you what, my dear?"

"About Mr. Cornwell."

"There is nothing to tell; not one word."

"Everybody thinks there is; and Emma Beals says—"

"Oh, never mind everybody. And I know exactly what Emma Beals says, and how she says it. Don't you remember how she tried to flirt with him, and he wouldn't flirt? She hasn't forgiven me that

yet. But she may have him; if she can, for all I care." "Oh, don't say that, Belle! He is so very nice."

"Yes, he is very nice, too nice, I think. It would be overwhelming; and I don't want to be overwhelmed. But if I have anything to tell I will tell you first, because you told me first. And now let us go to sleep."

How I hugged myself mentally when I thought how clever I had been, how bravely I had fought my little duel with Mrs. Grundy. I had told Matilda a story to save myself, but that would be the last. I was very sorry for it, but my adventure was a dead secret, and now I was going to be good for the rest of my life.

How little I knew what a week was before me! Monday.—Cousin Tom and some of the practically useful members of society, had returned to London.

The morning had been dull, the afternoon was heavy. About a dozen "girls" sat under the trees talking.

"Why didn't you manage to get back in time for the picnic last Saturday, Belle?"

"Oh, because I had forgotten all about it."

"Dear me! Mr. Cornwell must have been killing interesting. And, oh, Belle! what do you think? Emma Beals says that she saw him in the grove, just as we were starting. She says she is perfectly sure of it."

"It must have been an optical illusion," says Belle.

"Of course it was. But she insists upon it that you had returned before we started, and had your own sweet reasons for staying away."

"I don't know what reasons I could have, and I hardly think that I got back quite so early. Besides, I would have seen Matilda, for I went directly to our room; and I was so tired that I went without my supper too."

"Poor girl! The course of true love, you know. But I don't pity you very much; for, as mamma says, you have caught the biggest fish in the market."

"I haven't caught anything," says Belle, indignantly.

"I don't mean that you fished for him, my dear; only he is caught, and he shows it dreadfully."

Tuesday.—In the afternoon a fishing excursion was proposed. The ladies retire to put on their walking-dress.

They assemble on the piazza. Enter Emma Beals, much excited.

"It is the most peculiar thing! I could not find my thick boots. I looked everywhere! And they are marked with my name in full too. So I had to wear these."

They start; walk as far as the brook, look at it, and, thinking it a pleasant spot for private fishing, pair off according to the laws of attraction.

Belle is pensive. Mr. Cornwell wastes his sweetness on the desert air.

They return home. Belle rushes up to her room, takes up a white parcel, opens it. A pair of boots becomes visible.

She looks inside of them. "Emma Beals" is the name that greets her eyes! She sits on the floor, and stares at the boots. Tableau!

Wednesday.—Early in the morning a solitary female pedestrian might have been seen wandering on the beach. She disappears behind the rocks, takes out a pair of boots from under her shawl, fills them with stones, and throws them into the sea.

Thursday.—Emma Beals has been out walking; comes up to Belle with a smile on her face and a fan in her hand.

"I found this near the wood, and I knew it was yours because his name is on," she explains, pointing with her eyes to that absurd "When this you see, remember Mr. C."

Friday.—But I must return to the first person style, because what happened to me on that day was of a strictly first personal nature.

My feelings during that unfortunate week can better be imagined than described. I was afraid of the girls, ashamed of myself, but, above all, I hated Mr. Cornwell.

It was his perseverance in making sentimental speeches that had brought all this trouble and wickedness upon me, and he deserved to be hated. But the day of reckoning was at hand, and revenge is sweet.

I had gone to the sea-shore that evening to admire the sunset and be alone. But I was not alone for long.

Mr. Cornwell always seemed to have an intuitive sense of my whereabouts, and was now coming, as a lamb to the slaughter.

After the first remarks about the beauty of the evening my sense of intuition told me that Mr. Cornwell was going to speak. I could have prevented the explosion even then, but I would not prevent it.

There must be an end to everything, and the end of this had come.

Mr. Cornwell spoke. I was not as cool, inwardly, as I had expected to be. Perhaps he did not speak distinctly, or else my hearing was disturbed, for I hardly knew what he said. But I remember quite plainly how the little waves kissed the rocks at my feet, and sent up drops of foamy spray around us; and the sunset was so beautiful! No—so horrible! For now Mr. Cornwell was silent, waiting for an answer.

It was a solemn occasion, and must be met solemnly. Therefore, I said, only half-looking at him:

"Mr. Cornwell, when, in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for a woman—"

Gracious! I must have read that somewhere, and I wouldn't for the world quote Shakespeare to him just then; so, in my own prose, I told him frankly and explicitly that I would always be his friend, but nothing more.

Then he left me; and I made myself admire the sunset long after the last ray of glory had departed.

Saturday morning.—Mr. Cornwell returned to London.

Saturday Afternoon.—People began to ask me how long he would be away. My course was plain. I looked pensive, but modest; pensive, yet hopeful.

It was awfully wicked, but I had vowed to circumvent Mrs. Grundy, and she was circumvented.

Matilda scrutinized my expressive features, but said nothing till Sunday afternoon, when, as she was composing herself for a nap, she suddenly asked:

"I suppose it is all settled. When is it to come off?"

"Things that are not settled cannot come off, my dear. So, please don't talk any more about it."

Then Matilda, leaning on her elbow, said, impressively:

"Isabella, I am ashamed of you! Ever since last winter you have let that man follow you about, you know you have. And now I wonder what sort of a husband you expect to get—a king?"

Matilda's wrath died away in a small groan. Her fair head sunk upon the pillow, and I knew that she was going to comfort herself with dreams of John Smith, so I let her alone.

What she could find in him to dream about was a wonder to me. To my impartial vision he was a good but deeply uninteresting young man; yet she had raised an altar to him in her heart, and, whatever befell, she could go there and find peace. What did she see in him, behind what I saw, that she was willing to forsake all others, and keep only unto him, so long as they both should live?

That brought back Matilda's question, "What sort of a husband did I expect to get—a king?" Yes, my king.

I was not all ambitious. If a woman wants to sell herself, she naturally likes to command a good price. But I was not a woman of business. I wanted neither "the best catch," nor "the biggest fish," nor anything connected with "the market." I only wanted to fall in love, and I couldn't do it!

Why should Matilda be ashamed of me? Was it my fault if I was not in love with Mr. Cornwell? I had always liked him; and if he had not made me hate him I would have liked him faithfully to the end. But that was not love.

I knew perfectly how I would feel if I ever met my king. He would look at me, and I would look at him, and we would look at each other. Then a throb of exquisite bliss would thrill my whole being. One hundred and twenty pounds of exquisite bliss! Only think of it! Then a sensation of rapture. I forgot how it goes, but I had read descriptions of it in several poems, and I knew what to expect.

When I had first met Mr. Cornwell I had felt no throbbing emotion. I had thought that he was a good-looking, gentlemanly, middle-aged man, very quiet, and rather reserved. Then, as he had seemed to like me, I had liked him. That was all. And now he was gone, and it was all ended. I was glad of it—very glad indeed—truly and honestly glad.

I took more exercise during the next month than I had done during the whole summer. I took delightful walks all by myself, and got into a settled habit of resting on the rocks where we had taken our moonlight lunch.

People are so connected with places that it sometimes recalled Mr. Cornwell to my mind, but the recollection did not disturb my happiness. I could even think of what he had said, and how he had looked while saying it, without the least feeling of anger. I had forgiven him, you see. And it was a blessed relief not to have him there talking nonsense to me.

In fact everything was extremely blessed and delightful, but, for some unaccountable reason, I

became desperately tired of it all. Even Mrs. Grundy lost her attractive charm, and I began to think that this world was, indeed, a fleeting show, for woman's delusion given. So I was very willing to return to town. I had always liked London, but now I loved it.

Strangely enough, I soon discovered that London was as much of a delusion as the rest of the world. I went to one or two quiet parties, but, somehow, I did not enjoy them.

So I decided to give up worldliness, and devote myself to study and the production of Christmas presents.

But even that useful path had its thorns, for I found out, from Emma Beals's conversation that as Mr. Cornwell had also given up the world it was supposed that we spent our evenings together, in old-fashioned blessedness.

"And what is the use of making a mystery of it?" she asked. "Everybody has known it since last summer. And, for my part, I wouldn't shut up myself in this way for any old man, if he was ever so rich."

"Old man," indeed! Horrid creature! And I had not seen him for an age, except twice, in the street, when he had bowed to me, and I had bowed to him, and we had not spoken one word to each other.

New Year's Day came, and we had a great many calls, but Mr. Cornwell did not come. Of course, I did not care much about it, personally, but it certainly was not polite in him to slight the family.

The family survived it, however. Matilda was busy with her own concerns; Tom had found some one else to tease me about, and Mr. Cornwell's name was seldom mentioned by any of us.

One day, Tom came home to dinner with a piece of news. "What do you think, Belle?—Cornwell and Co. have gone to smash. You have had a escape."

"An escape from what?" I asked, severely.

"Don't be savage on poor Tom," said Matilda.

"I am very sorry for poor Mr. Cornwell, because he is so nice; but, of course, money is nice too."

"I don't see what money has to do with people. Don't you suppose some poor people are 'nice,' as you call it?"

"My dear Belle," said my aunt, "you did not understand Matilda. Poor people can be very nice in themselves, but when you keep house you will find that money is very useful."

"I have no doubt of it, but a little is as good as too much. I have more than I can spend, and I am sure it adds nothing to my happiness."

"Give it to me, Belle," said Tom, "it will add a great deal to my happiness."

But I did not feel like joking. I went up to my room after dinner, and, opening my writing-desk, I happened to see that unlucky fan; and when this I saw, I remembered Mr. C. I did more than that, I deliberately sat down and thought about him.

I was very sorry for him; it must be so hard for a man to fail. I wished I could do something to help him, but if he wouldn't come near us, of course, I could not run after him. And it was so ridiculous in Matilda to call him "nice." Nice! why, he was worth a thousand men like John Smith. I like to be just to everybody, and it was evident that Mr. Cornwell was greatly superior to—well—to the majority of people.

But thinking does no good. Nothing didn't do me no good—if I may be allowed a strong expression. I did not understand much about business, and Tom had such a mixed-up way of explaining those things to "women" that you could hardly tell which was which. But I understood this much, that, by some peculiar arrangement, other people wouldn't lose much, if anything, and that Mr. Cornwell had found some employment in a bank.

Just think of his going to work again in that way while I had more money than I needed! It was a shame for me to be spending so much on foolish things when some people had to work hard to earn their bread. I wouldn't do it any more. For I think we ought to sympathize with other people in their misfortunes. Don't you?

The winter passed very slowly. But "time and the hour runs through the roughest day." Spring came again, and with it the last party of the season.

"You must go to this party," said Matilda. "We are all going, and it wouldn't look well to stay away."

"I don't intend to go. I have done with parties," I said.

"I wish you would come," pleaded Matilda. "I don't understand what has come over you. One would think you were a disappointed woman."

"I am a disappointed woman. I would not consider myself fit for Heaven if the empty vanities of the world satisfied me," I answered, piously.

I was not sure that I was the more fit for Heaven for being cross to my cousin; but that I was cross was an undeniable fact, and I remained in that

angelic frame of mind all the morning. I had an engagement with the dressmaker in the afternoon, and prepared myself for a walk, sternly refusing my aunt's offer to take me down town in the carriage.

"Nature had given me feet," I justly observed, "and I intended to use them."

"And so I did, but it was a long walk, and I felt very tired when I found that the dress I had come to try on had not even been taken out of the paper."

My heaviness was increased by this disappointment; and as I walked, deeply disgusted with everything, I decided to ride home in an omnibus. Nature had not deprived me of feet, but she had neglected to clean the streets, and mud is not one of my weaknesses.

I entered the bus, took a seat, handed my fare to my neighbour and relapsed into meditation. It was soon disturbed.

Our bus met another bus, and being probably old familiar friends, they rushed into each other's arms, or wheels. Both busses went forward in opposite directions. There was a short struggle—a powerful wrench—an earthquake—then a sudden settling of the contending elements, and some one ventured to remark that we were "all right."

When I looked around for my mortal remains I found them at the other end of the bus, stranded on two narrow strips of broadcloth, and partly surrounded by two black slaves of the same material. I turned to view the owner, and found myself face to face with Mr. Cornwall.

I was very glad to see him—so glad that it made me forget Mrs. Grundy. One look at Mr. Cornwall told me that he was very glad to see me—so glad that it made me remember Mrs. Grundy; and, reaching myself, I sat down decorously by his side.

"I believe you have saved my life for the second time," I remarked, with assumed ease.

Mr. Cornwall did not answer, but I understood him: I was equal to the occasion; he was superior to it; and bowing before his greater truth, I remained silent too.

When we reached the corner of the street I cast an aspiring glance at the strap. Mr. Cornwall pulled it, and assisted me to alight.

"Now he will leave me," I thought. But he did not leave me. He walked on with me demurely, and I walked on with him, wondering when he would speak. Perhaps he did not know what to say, but he certainly did not speak.

In my heart of heart I did not believe that Mr. Cornwall had forgotten me. In some cases forgetting is one of the most difficult things to accomplish. We may forgive, but no amount of perseverance can enable us to forget.

I could not tell him that, however; and, thinking it best to say something, I said:

"I fear, Mr. Cornwall, that you have forgotten your old friends."

Why would he look at me like that, instead of saying something for me to answer? I was almost sorry I had met him. No, I was almost too glad, and I ought to show it. Why could I not be true? Because I was a woman? Then I would not be a woman, and I would tell the truth. So I said:

"Mr. Cornwall, we hope—that is, I hope—I mean—"

Then he began to speak. He told the truth, too, better than I had done. It pleased me better.

When we parted, near the house, the last thing he said was:

"May I come this evening?"

And the last thing I answered was:

"Yes."

He came that evening, and several other evenings. But when summer came he came no more. For, in the leafy month of June, I had dressed myself all in white, to say "Yes" to him worthily.

A. J. B.

**SAVE UP SOMETHING.**—It fortunately happens that no man thinks he is likely to die soon, so every one is much disposed to defer the consideration of what ought to be done on the supposition of such an emergency, and while nothing is so uncertain as human life, so nothing is so certain as our assurance that we shall survive most of our neighbours. The determination to lay by often creates the power to lay by, and the first effort is the most difficult. Let it always be remembered that in putting away something for a rainy day a man purchases a certain amount of mental tranquillity, and thus he may actually extend his life by providing against the results of his death.

**NOSEGARS.**—Flowers should not be cut during sunshine, or kept exposed to the solar influence, neither should they be collected in large bundles and tied tightly together, as this invariably hastens their decay. When in the room where they are to remain, the end of the stalks should be cut clean across with a sharp knife (never with scissors), by which means

the tubes through which they draw the water are left open, so that the water ascends freely, which it will not do if the tubes of the stems are bruised or lacerated. An endless variety of ornamental vases are used for the reception of such flowers, and they are all equally well adapted for the purpose, so that the stalks are inserted in pure water. This water ought to be changed every day, or at least once in two days, and a thin slice should be cut off from the end of each stalk every time the water is removed, which will revive the flowers.

## ACROSS THE DARK WATERS.

"CARL, I know you think me foolish, but I cannot shake off the feeling. Oh! I would give all I ever hope to possess in the world to know that you were not to sail in that vessel to-morrow."

Carl Henschel smiled, and gently caressed the pale cheek of the girl he was engaged to marry; and a sweet and lovely girl she was—fair Marguerite, Fraum, or Gretchen, as her lover called her in German fashion.

"What is it that you fear, liebling?" he asked, more for the sake of humouring her than because he had any wish to know what he called a foolish superstition.

"I scarcely know, dear Carl, it is a dread—a nameless, indescribable dread of something that is going to take you from me forever. Whether it is that you will return no more or that some other girl will steal your heart from me, that I cannot tell; but something awful, something that will be heard whispers in my heart 'You will see him no more—you will see him no more!'"

With a convulsive cry she started up and caught him wildly in her arms, pressing his head to her bosom till he could feel the trembling of her heart against his cheek. More moved by her agitation than he cared to acknowledge, Carl soothed her by every tender word he could utter to express his love and calm her fears; and after a while Gretchen, rallied herself somewhat, and tried to laugh at her own exaggerated fancies. The hour grew late, and the lovers parted at length, to meet on the morrow for a final "adieu," and Gretchen, though her heart felt heavier than lead, made an heroic effort for calm and cheerfulness—all the more because just as the last it seemed as though her gloomy forebodings had a trifle dashed her lover's spirits.

"You will never again think of any one coming between me and you, my Gretchen," he asked. "Death alone can keep me from you, and even then I think my spirit would return to say 'Adieu,' and beg you not to mourn too deeply for my loss."

He caught her once more in his breast, kissed her passionately, and the next moment Gretchen was alone, listening to the heavy door as it closed behind him, and then to the ring of his footsteps as they died far away down the street. Slowly her leaden steps carried her to her room; but not to rest. She spoke truly when she said she could not shake off the feelings that overmastered her. Faint and sad, she sank into a seat and gave herself up to gloomy musings. Did she indeed fear another woman who might usurp her place in Carl's heart? She knew that her dread was a more appalling one. Was it a rival more terrible than any of this world that she feared?

"Pale, beyond porch and portal,  
Crowded with calm leaves she stands,  
Who gathers all things mortal  
With cold, immortal hands."

Gretchen dared not acknowledge to herself that such was her fear; but the lines of the poet rang like a knell in her ears, and she shivered as though she felt the touch of those "cold, immortal hands" already between her and her lover. She burst into hysterical weeping, and the outburst of emotion calmed her. The customary reaction followed it, and after a time she slept soundly till the morning light, streaming over her pale face, awakened her.

She was up and dressed at an early hour; but, early as it was, Carl was announced almost as soon as she was ready to see him. The last hours flew by with that sickening rapidity which we have all felt when every hour seemed a minute, while we would gladly have stretched every second to an hour. Gretchen, with many friends, accompanied Carl to the vessel; and with scores of others they walked up and down the deck of the ill-fated "Schiller," speaking again and again words of parting, words of hope and cheer and love and promises, a hundred times repeated, to write every day.

The gentle girl bore up bravely as long as they were together; but her father lifted her light form into the carriage, and placed her fainting in her mother's arms, as the vessel that bore her lover sailed away. After a couple of days of utter prostration the

strong vitality of youth asserted itself, and Gretchen strove with all the powers of her mind to dispel the gloom which had taken possession of her, and succeeded so far that she sometimes dreamed in the castle-building visions which lovers delight in of the return of her lover, and of the time when nothing could separate them—when she would accompany him in all his journeyings by sea or land, and never more let earth or ocean come between them.

One night she retired to rest very tired, for she strove with constant occupation to keep her mind employed, and often over-fatigued herself; but her spirits were good, and her thoughts of Carl hopeful and joyous. She fell asleep with his name on her lips, and a prayer that he would soon return to her. That prayer was granted sooner than she expected.

In the days that followed Gretchen could never determine how long she had slept; she only knew that she awakened suddenly, feeling her name called, and started up in bed, listening, when she heard herself called again, in a low voice, but quite distinctly, she knew the voice for Carl's, and she rose quickly, threw on her dressing-gown, and went to the window which opened over the street. Her room was over the street and, was situated on the first floor, and the night being warm, she had left the window half-opened for air; the moonlight flooded the room when she fell asleep; but now the moon was gone, and by the light of the street-lamps she saw Carl Henschel standing on the door-steps and looking up at her window. When she leaped out and looked down at him he spoke her name for the third time. She gave a quick, glad cry.

"Oh, Carl, is it you?" she asked.

"Yes, my Gretchen, it is I; I told you I would come back, liebling."

His voice sounded sad, but sweet with love and the joy of seeing her; and Gretchen felt that she could have flown down out of the window into his arms.

"Stay, Carl—wait a moment, dearest, and I will come down to you," she said, and springing hastily for her slippers, she put them on, drew her dressing-gown closer about her, and hurried downstairs. No thought of the hour of night oppressed her, although confused questionings rose in her mind, asking how came Carl there? by what chance had he returned? Oh, no doubt he had repeated of the voyage—the vessel had passed another vessel homeward-bound, and he had returned to her. What matter how, so long as he had come, and in a moment he would explain it all. She reached the door, her eager nervous fingers locked and unlocked it in her haste, fumbled with the chain, but succeeded at last in obviating her, and the door was open.

"Oh, Carl, my own—my darling!"

She made one step forward, but recoiled, cold and trembling, and leaned for support against the door. There was no one on the steps, no one within eight, but the policeman, slowly passing along the street on the opposite side, and he glanced toward her with amazement and inquiry. She summoned all her strength, and, retreating into the hall, she looked and bolted the door again.

"I have been dreaming!" she thought, and tried to believe so; but she shook as with an ague, and her trembling limbs almost sank beneath her as she mounted the stairs to her room again. She looked at the window—yes, it was open; she knew she had looked out of it, and seen him, and now—

"Gretchen!" Once more she heard her name spoken, and it was his voice.

"Carl—Carl!" she cried, and tottered to the window.

She sank down beside it, leaned out, with clasped hands, and wild eyes imploringly bent downwards. She did not dream now; she knew she had not dreamed before; for standing on the front steps she saw Carl Henschel, and looking up at her, the face whose image was graven on her heart.

The head was now uncovered, but he held no hat in his hands, both of which hung limply by his side, and from his whole figure Gretchen saw that drops of water dripped, dripped in a shower to the pavement, and the face appeared to her, with the lamp-light shining on it, was the face of the dead. With one low, awful cry she sank helpless on the floor.

Gretchen still lay unconscious, in that deep swoon, when her mother entered the room at an unusually early hour; and it was the close of the second day before she returned to the things of this world sufficiently to recognise those about her. When she did their sad faces and miserable attempts at composure were terribly well understood by her; and she knew why all the papers of the day were carefully kept from her.

Gretchen smiled sadly, and, laying her pale hand gently on her mother's, she said:

"You need not fear to tell me, my mother, I know it all. The 'Schiller' is lost, and my Carl is drowned."

Mrs. Fraum became very pale, and burst into tears.

"Who has told you, then, Gretchen?" she sobbed.

"Carl himself; he came to me that night when you found me the morning afterwards as one dead."

Mrs. Fraum thought her child saved; and, indeed, Gretchen's story sounded like delirium; but even her parents were obliged to accept it as truth at last. The girl read the terrible tidings of the "Schiller" disaster with the same immovable calm which had distinguished her manner since that visit from her dead lover—no tear, no sob relieved her pent-up anguish—and so she continued. Whether the blow to her affections and the shock to her brain will take away her life or her reason none can tell; but her dearest friends feel that death would be so welcome to her that they pray for the coming of the dread messenger who will bear her spirit to that of him she loved so well—so sadly!

E. C.

## LANDLORD AND TENANT.

"Constrution wise all houses, say I!" roared Squire Clingley, striding up and down his snug little library like a wild animal in its den. "Taxes, repairs, insurance, and a 'To Let' always hung up on the front door! I was a tenant once to buy that house. I wouldn't if Foxwell hadn't told me it was a dead bargain. He talked me into it, the sly, city-tongued fellow, and now here he is telling me, as cool as cucumber, that it needs a new roof! There'll be twenty pounds clear out of my pocket! And not a shilling in! There he comes now! I'll give him a piece of my mind! See if I don't! I say, Foxwell—what is it? A tenant for Rose Lodge?"

"A tenant?" responded Mr. Foxwell, the real estate agent, seating himself comfortably in a big easy-chair, and mopping the polished surface of his bald head with a speckled silk pocket-handkerchief.

"Never heard of such a thing in my life!" cried out the squire. "Three years that house has stood vacant, making its own head of with taxes and repairs, until the roof has fallen in, and the neighbours says there's a ghost there, and now here's a tenant! What's going to happen next?"

"Wishes take possession to-morrow," said Mr. Foxwell. "Will pay eight pounds quarterly, in advance. Lease, three or five years. Best of references. A widow lady."

"I don't like widows," said the squire, with a grimace.

"No!" said Mr. Foxwell. "But that's scarcely a logical reason for refusing to let her the house."

"I suppose she must have it," said the squire. "After a house has stood empty for three years, a man can't afford to stand on trivial objections. But there's one thing I want understood first—she mustn't expect me to call on her!"

"Oh, I don't think she expects anything of the sort," said Foxwell. "She—"

"I darsay—I darsay," unceremoniously interrupted the squire. "I'll have the gate between Rose Lodge and this place nailed up, and change my rooms to the north side. Then there can't be any possibility of collision. I leave all the business part to you, Foxwell."

"All right, squire," said Mr. Foxwell, carelessly.

"A red-faced virago of forty don't doubt," muttered the squire himself, "who has nagged one husband into the other world, and is on the outlook for another! I'll give her a wide berth!"

So Mrs. Applegate arrived with a boucior piano, a mimicviary, a poodle, and a whole consorsatory of plants, and established herself in Rose Lodge, without ever having looked upon the face of her landlord.

"I wish she wasn't a widow," said the squire. "If she had been a man, now, I could have strolled over there for a comfortable smoke of an evening."

The squire had gone out one sultry July afternoon to see about the cutting down of some trees on the edge of the swamp when he heard a little feeble cry for help from the adjoining pasture field.

"Hullo," said the squire to himself, "what's up now?"

And scrambling over the wall the squire came face to face with a pretty, pale-cheeked girl of eighteen or nineteen, who was perched half-way up the stone fence, in mortal terror of a huge and belligerent-looking bull, who stood in the middle of the field, pawing the ground, and uttering a low, ominous r-r.

The besieged damsel came flying toward the squire, seizing his arm in both her hands.

"Oh, help me, help me!" she pleaded. "I shall be gored to death!"

The squire burst out laughing.

"You silly child," said he. "Don't you see

that he is tethered to the ground? He can't get away."

"But I was so frightened," said the girl, the colour coming and going on her cheek with every breath she drew. "Oh, I was so frightened!"

The squire looked down at her. She was very pretty with curly rings and tendrils of silky black hair, a complexion of clear olive, and dusk, glittering eyes. Generally the squire disliked and distrusted women—he had had one or two severe lessons, poor old misanthrope—but who could be vexed with such a pretty child as this?

"My dear," said he, "it's natural enough. But you shouldn't be out here alone by yourself. Tell your mother to take better care of you. Where do you live?"

"At Rose Lodge!" she faltered.

"I'll walk home with you. What did you come out for—buttercups or butterflies?" he asked, good-humouredly.

"I come out for a little walk," said she, shyly.

"I—I don't know who you are."

"I'm Mr. Chingley."

"The squire?"

"Yes. So they call me. Why, what is there so stranger about that?" he asked, noticing the quick change on her face.

"I've heard of the squire," said the dark-eyed damsel. "And somehow formed the idea that he was cross and elderly. But you—"

And here she checked herself in evident confusion.

"Well, I'm not young," said the squire, laughing. "And I can be cross. But you needn't be afraid, my child. I shall not be cross with you. Would you like to cross to the high road through my rose-gardens? I assure you they're well worth looking at."

"Oh! I should be so delighted!" said the young lady, her dimpled face lighting up all of a sudden.

"I have so longed to see them. But they told me you didn't like strangers."

"And I don't," as a general rule," said the squire, a little irritated at these being brought face to face with his own battalion of squires. "But I think I shall have to make an exception in your favour. And, I suppose—a little more slowly—" in your mother's also."

"I thank you," said the young lady, "but mamma isn't with me."

"Not with you?" said the squire. "That accounts for your wandering about in this careless sort of way. Write to her to come at once."

The damsel looked surprised—but just then they entered the squire's beautiful rose-garden, and he went off into a catalogue of learned names that was at least a quarter of an hour long.

"A pretty little creature," said the squire, when his visitor had gone home with both hands full of gorgeous white and crimson blossoms. "I really think I must call upon the Applegates! I never saw fairer eyes in my life, and she has a voice like a flute. Yes, I'll call—I'll certainly call—and see if there is anything more needs doing, to make that old rattletrap of a place comfortable."

"Well, squire," said Mr. Foxwell, that afternoon when he came in for his usual chat, "how do you like the widow?"

"The widow! What widow?"

"Mrs. Applegate, to be sure."

"I haven't seen Mrs. Applegate."

"Why, yes you have!"

"I'll thank you not to contradict me," said the squire, winking cholericly. "I have not seen Mrs. Applegate."

"Mum alive!" cried out the agent, forgetting his respect in his eagerness, "she was walking with you in the rose-garden this morning!"

The squire looked surprised.

"Mrs. Applegate! Was that pretty child Mrs. Applegate?"

"Herself and none other!"

"Why, she isn't eighteen!"

"I beg your pardon—eighteen and a half! She told me so herself!"

"The deuce!" said the squire. "Why, what business has a widow to be so young and pretty? Well, anyhow, I'm going over to the Lodge to call this afternoon."

He was as good as his word.

Well, any reader of the great book of human nature can easily guess the rest. The squire had held himself absolutely aloof from feminine society so long that the first relapse into it possessed all the zest and sparkle that he imagined had departed with his lost youth. Mrs. Applegate was pretty, alone, and poor. The squire was rich, not bad-looking, and able to converse well. And so when their engagement was publicly made known in the autumn nobody was very much surprised.

So that Rose Lodge is "To Let" again. And if any one wants an eligible summer residence they have only to apply to Mr. Foxwell. Premises in good repair. Rent invariable in advance.

H. R.

## THE VOICES OF ANIMALS.

AQUATIC animals are mute. A world of radishes, molluscs, and fishes, therefore, would be silent. Insects are about the only invertebrates capable of producing sound. Their organs are usually external, while those of higher animals are internal. Insects of rapid flight generally make the most noise. In some the noise is produced by friction (stridulation); in others, by the passage of air through the spiracles (humming). The buzzing of flies and bees is caused in part by the vibrations of their wings; but it comes mainly from the spiracles of the thorax. Snakes and lizards have no vocal chords, and can only hiss. Frogs croak, and crocodiles roar by the vibrations of the glottis. The huge tortoises of the Galapagos islands utter a hoarse, bellowing noise. The vocal apparatus in birds is situated at the lower end of the trachea, where it divides into the two bronchi. It consists mainly of a long drum with a cross bone, having a vertical membrane attached to its upper edge. Five pairs of muscles (in the songsters) adjust the length of the windpipe to the pitch of the glottis. The various notes are produced by differences in the blast of air, as well as by changes in the tension of their lining membranes, while the range of the notes is commonly within an octave. Birds of the same family have a similar voice. All the parrots have a harsh utterance; geese and ducks quack; crows, magpies, and jays caw; while the warblers differ in the quality, rather than the kind, of note.

Some species possess great compass of voice. The bull-bird can be heard nearly three miles; and Livingstone said he could distinguish the voices of the vetch and lion only by knowing that the former roared by day and the latter by night.

The vocal organ in mammals, unlike that of birds, is in the upper part of the larynx. It consists of four cartilages, of which the largest (the thyroid) produces the prominence in the human throat known as Adam's apple and two elastic bands, called vocal chords, just below the glottis, or upper opening of the windpipe. The various tones are determined by the tension of these chords, which is effected by the raising or lowering of the thyroid prominence. The will cannot influence the contraction of the vocalising muscles, except in the very act of vocalization.

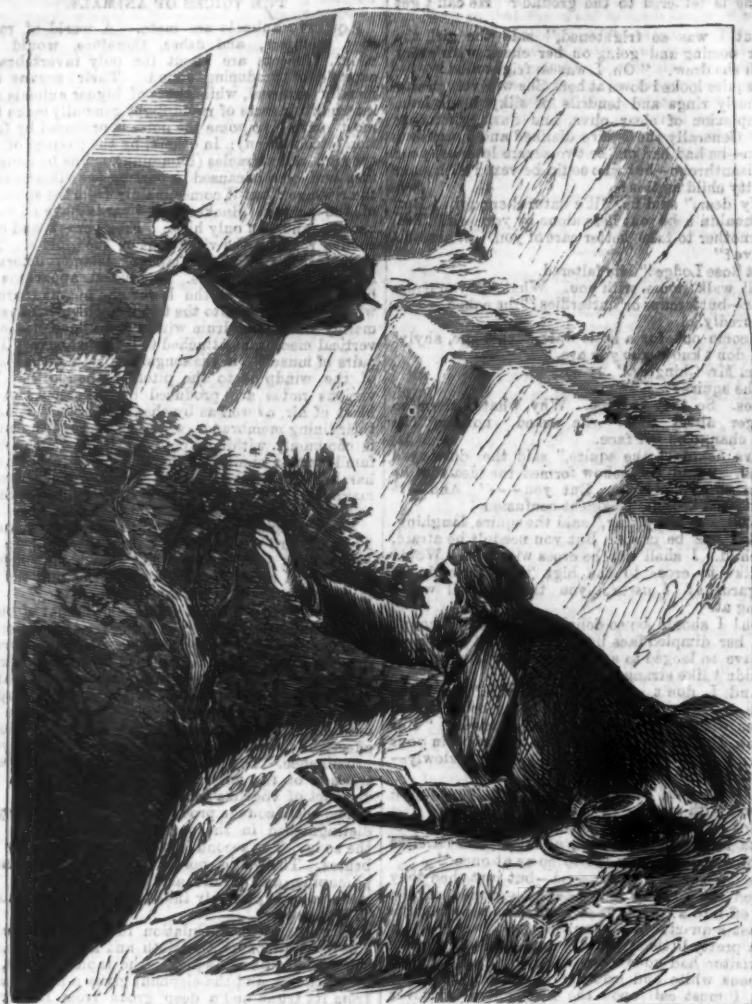
The vocal sounds produced by mammals may be distinguished in the ordinary voice, the cry, and the song. The second is the sound made by the brutes. The whale, porpoise, otter, seal, walrus, porcupine, and giraffe are generally silent. The cat's voice is probably the smallest sound audible to human ears.

There is little modulation in brute utterances. The common parrot, the stoat and kangaroo moan, the hog grunts or squeals, the tapir whistles, the stag bellows, and the elephant gives a hoarse noise from its trunk and a deep groan from its throat. All sheep have a guttural voice. All the cows low, from the bison to the musk-ox; all the horses and donkeys neigh; all the cats mew, from the domestic animal to the lion; all the boars growl; all the canine family, fox, wolf, and dog, bark, howl, and whine. The howling monkey and gorilla have a large sac or cavity in the throat for resonance, enabling them to utter a powerful sound; and one of the gibbons has the remarkable power of emitting a complete octave of musical notes.

The human voice, taking the male and the female together, has a range of nearly four octaves. Man's power of speech, or the utterance of articulate sounds, is due to his intellectual development, rather than to any structural difference between him and the apes. Song is produced by the glottis, speech by the mouth.

The match between Galopin and Lowlander was recently run off at Newmarket, and resulted in favour of the Derby winner by a length.

A SIXTEEN REMEDY.—Don't take opium in any form to induce sleep—they will surely leave traces of their influence next morning—but eat freely of raw onions just before retiring. Everybody knows the taste of onions; this is due to a peculiar essential oil contained in this most valuable and healthful root. This oil has, I am sure, highly soporific powers. In my own case they never fail. If I am much pressed with work and feel I shall not sleep, I eat two or three small onions, and the effect is magical. Onions are also excellent things to eat when much exposed to intense cold, and enable one to bear it much better than beer, spirits, etc. Finally, if a person cannot sleep, it is because the blood is in the brain, not in his stomach; the remedy, therefore, is obvious; call the blood down from the brain to the stomach. This is to be done by eating a biscuit, a hard-boiled egg, a bit of bread and cheese, or something. Follow this up with a glass of milk, or even water, and you will soon fall asleep.—J. M.



[THE FALL.]

## LILLIAN'S RISK.

AWAY beyond Land's End, nursed in the bosom of the mighty Atlantic, are a group of islands, forty in number, which are called the Scilly Isles.

In the largest of these, St. Mary's, dwelt a gentleman, with his only daughter. Mr. James, for such was the gentleman's name, lived in the quietest and most retired manner, although he was extremely wealthy. His daughter, in whose life all his happiness was centred, was a lovely girl of seventeen years of age.

Lillian James was a true representative of genuine English beauty. Fair, light brown hair streamed down luxuriously almost to her waist. Her trustful, gentle blue eyes could not do aught than fascinate. Her complexion was delicate without being sickly. Her features were regular, but what struck you most when looking at Lillian was her eyebrows and deep-fringed eyelashes. These were much darker than the tresses adorning her fair head and gave her an arch, bewitching look. Her figure, though not tall, was extremely graceful and, owing to her fondness for outdoor exercise, glowed with the elasticity of health.

But, combined with the beauties of the person, what gave her a greater charm was a highly cultivated mind. Her dawning powers of intellect had been her father's constant care and study. Having lost his wife soon after Lillian's birth, and being disappointed in various ways, he had determined on absolute retirement.

St. Mary's Isle afforded him this, and he therefore chose it as his place of residence, forgetting the outside world and devoting himself to his daughter and his studies.

At the time our story commences he was called on imperative business to London, his brother being in a dangerous state of health, so he was obliged to leave Lillian to the care of her old nurse, Margaret, who had been with her since childhood.

On the first day of his departure Lillian felt very dull indeed, but in youth it is very easy to regain one's spirit, so by the next morning nobody could have been gay or more cheerful than Lillian when she took her book and started for her morning ramble.

St. Mary's abounds in wild, romantic scenery, which had a particular charm to the young girl, who almost lived in imagination.

One lonely, picturesque ravine was her favourite haunt. A wild path led up to a cave on one side of the steep slope, and in this cavern Lillian would study her favourite authors for hours together.

This rocky solitude was so rarely visited by anyone but herself that she felt rather surprised and annoyed on arriving there on the morning in question at seeing a young man stretched lazily on the green sward near the path she took to her little retreat.

He was reading some book very intently as she approached, but on seeing her he gazed at her admiringly though politely.

Lillian passed on, hoping he would soon go, so that she could ascend to her favourite eminence, and while the young lady is strolling impatiently down the hollow glade, pretending to be interested in culling wild flowers, we will pause to introduce the intruder.

There are some young men who look as if they were always got up to represent a comedy lover. If Sheridan's Charles Surface were to array himself in a modern tourist's suit you would have a conception of the appearance of the young man who had invaded Lillian's retreat.

He was eminently handsome, but had an unmistakably theatrical appearance, which, however, did not belie him, as he had acted very successfully. Yes, Raymond Creston was an actor, possessed of great intellect and ability, and was entire author of several sterling dramatic efforts, which he himself had assisted in delineating. Utterly prostrate by a long course of mental and bodily exertion, he had

retired for a time to St. Mary's, choosing it as the most out-of-the-way place he could think of, to re-cultivate his health and energies.

After waiting some time for the young man who have just described to take himself off, Lillian became impatient and determined to get to her destination in spite of him.

She boldly ascended the steep pathway which led to her retreat. It had originally been formed by a streamlet of water flowing from the top of the cliff, but this had long since dried up, leaving a rugged kind of natural staircase.

Whether the presence of the young man at the foot of the pathway made her nervous, I can't say, but when she had nearly reached the cave, which was about thirty feet up the slope, her foot slipped and, with a scream, she fell over the steep side of the ravine.

On hearing her cry Raymond darted to his feet, fearing the reckless girl was dashed to atoms. Happily, though, after falling a few feet, Lillian had managed to catch hold of the bough of a tree that grew from out a cleft in the rocky side, and there she was hanging between life and death in a most perilous position.

Raymond immediately rushed up the pathway, clambering fearlessly over every obstacle, and crept down the face of the rock towards the tree to which Lillian was hanging, risking his life at every step he took.

He gained the cleft from which the tree projected, but here a fearful difficulty presented itself to him. Would the bough bear both their weights? Would it snap and hurl them both into eternity?

However, it must be attempted. Creeping along the bough, he managed to seize hold of Lillian's arm just as her strength was failing her.

With extreme care, and exercise of great bodily strength, he managed to get his arm round her waist and draw her up to a ledge in the rock.

"Thank Heaven!" he exclaimed, "she is safe!"

Lillian looked at him as if she could never sufficiently show her gratitude and swooned in his arms.

When she recovered he assisted the trembling and agitated girl back to the pathway and they reached the bottom of the pass in safety.

Lillian thanked Raymond, with a blushing face, and they walked towards her home.

When they arrived at the gate Raymond asked permission to call in the afternoon to inquire if her tright had had any bad effects, and then left her.

When Lillian got indoors the first thing she did was to rush to her chamber, throw herself on her couch and, hiding her flushed head on the pillows, burst into a fit of sobbing.

Poor girl, she had started for her matutinal stroll in the highest spirits, and had narrowly escaped a dreadful death. But there was something else gnawing at Lillian's heart. For the first time in her life she felt what it was to love.

Her handsome preserver had inspired her with other feelings beside those of gratitude. She thought how he had held her in his arms, and sobbed at the recollection for very shame.

What would he think of her clambering over the rocks in such a tomboyish manner? Who was he? What was his name? and did he like her in the same way that she felt she was fast growing to like him?

We will leave her questioning and tormenting herself, to follow Raymond's footsteps.

"What a lovely creature!" thought Raymond, as he walked slowly away from the house. "I'm glad I was of some use to her. I never saw such a pretty girl before. I wonder what in the name of fortune she wanted up that cliff?"

Meditating on Lillian, he unconsciously wended his way back to the ravine.

When he came to the scene of his late adventure he found the book which Lillian had dropped when she fell.

He took it up, and judge the actor's surprise and joy when he found it to be a volume of Shakespeare. In the title-page "Lillian James" was written in a female hand.

"Darling Lillian!" murmured Raymond. "To think a pretty girl like her could study Shakespeare!"

The book was turned down at the play of "The Tempest." Mentally he compared himself to Ferdinand and Lillian to Miranda.

He longed for the afternoon to come, so that he could have an excuse for seeing her again, so it appears that Raymond was as much wounded by Cupid's shafts as was Lillian.

Raymond called in the afternoon, and the old nurse, on hearing the tale of Lillian's danger, welcomed him with tears in her eyes.

She did not scruple to allow him her young charge's society, and of course, the old, old story—

before two days had passed the young couple were pledged to each other by the tenderest of vows, and Lillian only longed for her father's return to tell him of her happiness, never dreaming for a minute she could possibly raise any objection to her handsome lover.

Raymond, however, awaited Mr. James's arrival with anxiety. He had a vast deal of pride and knew in what prejudice the theatrical portion of the community are held by most people.

The consequences of this to him was extremely galling. He had not even told Lillian of his profession.

He anticipated immediate dismissal from Mr. James when he learnt that his beloved daughter had engaged herself to a play-actor.

Mr. James not returning, Raymond, being extremely honourable, determined to seek him in London, where he was stopping.

He communicated his resolution to Lillian, who, though of course approving of it, did not like parting with her darling hero. However, they did part at last, with lovers' usual tenderness, the details of which we will spare our readers, merely observing that Raymond promised to write to his "own darling little mountaineer," for so he called her, as soon as ever he got to the metropolis.

Left alone again, Lillian did not take any more romantic expeditions, but moaned about, looking at a very stately carte de visite, with "Raymond Creation" printed underneath.

She thought it rather extraordinary his name should be printed under the photograph he had given her, but never for a moment conceived her lover's profession. No, poor little girl, she was happy enough kissing the picture over and over again, and reading passages of books that Raymond had admired, and waiting for his promised letter.

Day after day went by, but still no letter from Raymond. What could it mean? Lillian became alarmed. She surmised all sorts of terrible accidents that might possibly have happened to him, but never for a moment imagined him unfaithful.

After a week of silence had elapsed Mr. James returned and was surprised to find his daughter looking pale and ill. She showed pleasure at his arrival, but in such a subdued way that Mr. James was alarmed.

He learned from her nurse the danger to which she had been exposed, but it was Lillian who, sobbing on his breast, informed him of the sequel to her adventure. Mr. James was very much astonished when she told him she had engaged herself to the young man, but tried to comfort her by saying he should throw no obstacle in their path provided the young man was worthy of her.

Lillian took courage and showed him her cherished likeness. Mr. James's face changed when he saw it.

"My child," he exclaimed, "similar photographs to this are displayed in the London shop-windows. He is a rising author and successful actor. You don't mean to say he is your lover? All this kind of people are most dissipated and wicked characters. Thank Heaven, I've come back! Has he written to you since he left?"

"No, papa," answered Lillian, "I can't understand it. He left here to find you, and that he has not done or you would have told me. He must be ill." Here Lillian burst into tears at the mere thought of such a calamity.

"Lillian," said Mr. James, "it is most probable he has deceived you, and you will never hear from him again—it is best indeed you should not. Think of him no more. Any one of his class could never have made you happy."

Lillian thought otherwise, but the new light in which Raymond's silence was shown to her affected her terribly. She could not believe him untrue. She still clung to her idol; but no letter ever came. Every mail that visited the island was waited for anxiously by the expectant girl, still no intelligence arrived.

At last Lillian grew so ill that her father determined to take her to a London physician, and to London accordingly they went. The physician said that all Miss James required was a little excitement and amusement.

"Nothing radically wrong, sir; good constitution. Show her London; take her to the theatres. Oh, by-the-by," continued the learned doctor, pocketing his fee, "there's a very exciting drama coming out to-night, for the first time, at Drury Lane, 'Tried and found true.' Go and see that."

Lillian's eyes sparkled when she heard the title, thinking of her lost lover.

"There," the doctor said, "you see she looks better at the mere mention of it."

Mr. James sighed, but determined to see the performance.

On arriving at the theatre in the evening he found the place crowded to excess. Only one box was

vacant, and that belonged to the manager and the author.

Mr. James fed the attendants liberally, and with some difficulty was allowed seats in the manager's box, neither that potentate nor the author of the drama being expected to use it.

The curtain rose before Lillian's bewildered eyes. She had never seen the inside of a theatre before. All seemed gilt and splendour to the delighted girl.

Her dream of fairyland and of the Arabian Nights seemed now to be realized. If it was excitement she required, she certainly had it.

After the trifle that opened the performance was finished, the piece of the evening, the drama that the doctor had mentioned, was put on.

Lillian was thrilled and deeply interested by the dramatic story.

The piece was very well written and cleverly acted, and was a grand success.

At the close of the last act the whole house resounded with loud cries of "Author! author!"

The door of the box which Mr. James and his daughter occupied was thrown open, and a young man, in evening dress, but with his fur-lined overcoat still on, rushed in breathless, and, drawing aside the curtains, bowing, received the applause of the assembled multitude.

Why did Lillian turn deadly pale, and Mr. James look uncomfortable?

The man who was receiving the ovation was Raymond Creation! He drew the curtains again and turned round.

"Good Heavens, Lillian!" he cried, seizing her hand; "nothing more was wanting to fill the cup of my success than you to witness it. But, my dear girl, why did you not answer my letter? I was coming to St. Mary's if I had not soon heard from you."

So Raymond had written after all, and as they afterwards found out, the letter had miscarried.

Nobody could have been happier than Lillian when she was convinced of Raymond's fidelity. Mr. James, on finding that his daughter's choice was a gentleman, and, what was better, a man of honour and honesty, gave his consent to the match on condition that he would retire from the stage as an actor.

This Raymond willingly did, having determined solely to devote himself to authorship, at which he had already been so successful.

And now Lillian and he are married, and in the quiet house of St. Mary's the happy dramatist revels in domestic joys and conjugal felicity. He works hard at his writing, and his little wife thinks more of his productions than anything that ever fell from the pen of Sheridan or Dickens.

Mr. James is perfectly contented while contemplating his daughter's happiness, so Lillian's risk did not terminate so very unfortunately after all.

H. H.

## KATE ARMOUR.

At the stroke of twelve, one night when there was no moon, the door of a large and handsome house in a pleasant country place opened softly and a girl crept out and looked anxiously about her. She was a pretty young creature, with a soft, foolish sort of face, and she had an air about her that told of good living and freedom from all care as to ways and means. Her dress was a handsome one, suitable for travelling, and in her hand she carried a Russia-leather bag.

Closing the door softly behind her, she hurried down the garden path, and at the gate found her hand clasped by the strong hand of a man—a handsome, big fellow, though even in that light one could see that he was not a refined person.

Indeed the man was her mother's own hired servant with whom she was bound to elope.

To say why she had been so foolish as to take a fancy to him, to explain the feelings that induced her young, beautiful and educated, the daughter of a wealthy woman, with a good position in society, to fall in love with a fellow who had nothing but a certain amount of coarse good looks to recommend him, would be to succeed where all the wise men in the world have failed thus far. Who has ever yet been able to give the reasons for a woman's infatuation for her lover? Indeed she has none, so that often in the years that blot her folly out she asks herself, "Why did I love that fellow?" and can find no answer. A man can generally say, "She was pretty" in the same case. It does not need even that to make a woman an idiot.

And so I cannot tell you why Kate Armour left her happy home, her mother, who loved her, her friends, and all her luxuries, for the kisses and praises of that boor of a groom, who had no honest worth to compensate for his lack of education and manners.

Go she did, however, and the two were married in the nearest town. Tom Scootcher having no doubt whatever that Mrs. Armour would relent when she heard that her girl was really married, and that he should live down in clover for the rest of his days.

He reckoned without his host, however. The mother replied to her daughter's first letter by forbidding her ever to write again. And when the answer came the groom was very angry.

However, he was in love in his coarse fashion just then, and, after sulking an hour or two, he turned to his wife and said:

"Well, you're as handsome as a picture anyway; and hang the woman!"

Then he took her by both arms, holding her so tightly that he left the marks of his fingers upon them and kissed her on the neck. A fierce, hot kiss, from which she shrank with a little scream, crying:

"Tom, you bit me!"

So he had. At least, it was a sort of bite. She did not know what to make of it. Afterward she learnt.

It was the first lesson he had dared to give her in the difference between the love of a brute and the love of a gentleman. And it was not long before she learnt that a passion utterly without sentiment falls like a curse upon any woman's life. Tom had no sentiment. Yet, for a while, her fresh beauty charmed him, and it was better with them than it was afterwards; for while it lasted he behaved decently.

He found work suited for him, and did it. He spared her what he could, as he said, "for finery," and she, though she began to understand the difference between being Miss Armour and Mrs. Tom Scootcher, clung to him as long as he yet told her she was "the prettiest girl anywhere." For a year she was often uncomfortable and very remorseful when she thought of her mother, but she was still blind enough to be happy at times.

Then a little babe lay on her bosom, and she was very delicate, and began to fade a little, and then Tom came home tipsy once or twice, and she could not tell which were worse, his liquor-flavoured kisses or curses.

Then—disenchantment having begun on both sides—a red-cheeked girl, chambermaid at a low tavern, made her jealous—jealous of Tom Scootcher. And reproaching him with it when he had had a glass, and foolishly twisting him with the fact that she had left wealth and luxury for him, and might have married well, he struck her.

So her love ended, and the lowest depth of misery was reached. She saw the man she belonged to for life in his true colours.

And now he often told her that she had lost all her good looks, and was nothing but a drag on a young fellow, who could marry "the prettiest girl going, if he were single."

"Oh, mother, mother, if you only knew," the girl often sobbed in secret; but she could not go home with Tom Scootcher's baby in her arms.

Indeed, she had not the resolution necessary to enable her to run away. A little, soft, silly thing she was still, and ever would be.

Tom Scootcher, with his habits, lost one place after another, and they moved on and on, living here and living there, sometimes with plenty to eat, sometimes with half enough, until the child was a year old.

Then, one morning, Tom Scootcher having found work in a neighbouring town, or so he declared, they travelled together across the country, the wife carrying the baby in her arms and a bundle on her back.

Kate Armour had disdained to carry the tiniest parcel.

They had come to a spot in the road where a grateful shade fell from some large elms, and here they sat down to eat and drink. Tom was in the best humour, for some reason, and made a joke at which his wife laughed. On that, flattered by her appreciation, he told her that "anyway her teeth were like pearls."

Praise is sweet to a woman, and she had heard no compliment for a long time.

"I'd grow good-looking again if we had better times," said she. "And there's mother with her great trunk full of money, and no one to spend it."

"Why, what do you mean, girl?" said Tom Scootcher. "Trunk full of money! Her money is in the bank, I suppose, like other folks'."

Kate laughed.

"Mother never will put money in banks," she said. "She's sure they'll fail. She has it invested in other ways; but she has thousands sometimes in an old red box under her bed. She throws rags and things on top, and says that is the best way to hide it. I've often worried over it at home."

"Yes," said Tom. "It's foolish, but women is

mostly idiot," and he sneered sardonically at his wife pale face.

Then he ate his bread and cheese and arose. "I'll go back to the tavern and get a drink of beer," he said. "You sit here—you and the kid."

The he stooped down and pinched the boy's cheek.

Not for months had her Orson been so charming. Kate was really comforted. She sat in the grateful shade for a long while, not wondering that he was long in coming back when he had reached so desirable a goal as a tavern; and after a while she fell asleep. It was a long, sweet sleep, and in it she saw her mother and the old house where she was born, in a strangely vivid dream. Her mother sat and looked at her in the old, loving way; and on her own lap lay a little dog that had been a great pet of hers in that sweet long ago. The tiny creature began to whine.

"Lie still," she said. "Lie still; what's the matter, Pinky?"

But Pinky whined louder.

"What can trouble him?" she said, again; and then she was broad awake, and it was not her little dog that whined in her arms, but her child—Tom Scooter's baby—and the sun was sinking, and she was still alone.

Tom was doubtless lying very drunk indeed on the tavern step by this time, she thought. But it was not his habit yet to neglect business, and he had said it was useful to reach their place of destination by dark, that he might present himself to his employer in the morning.

Impatiently she waited; but the moon had arisen, and still he did not come. All that she could do was to turn back and seek him in the tavern.

She had no money—no food. Such as he was, he was her husband, and in a sort her protector.

She arose, took up the bundle and the baby, and trudged back to the tavern.

Tom Scooter was not there. A man dressed as she described him had drunk there about noon, but had gone the other way; and now Kate began to understand that he had abandoned her.

At first going by herself to a spot where no one could see her she cried over it, and felt very unhappy.

Then hope filled her heart. Now her mother would relent and take her home.

She returned to the tavern, and asked the way to Grapemere. It was nearer than she thought—only fifteen miles away. Towards it she set her face.

Slowly and painfully she toiled on, begging her bread as she went. She slept in barns at times; once in a poor man's garret, with his little children; once in an old lime-kiln. At last the white spire of the church where she had been baptized arose from the green distance of tree-enchanted Grapemere. Then she saw an old red barn with which she was familiar, and its farmhouse, and a group of haymaking people. The last farm on the road to Grapemere, and now hope gave her strength. She would not lag until she met her mother.

She washed her own face and that of her child in a little pond. She shook some of the dust from her clothes, and walked on more slowly, coming at length into the trim street, with its houses half-hidden in their fine gardens, in which stood her mother's dwelling-place. Yes, she must be forgiven—she must, she would. But what was this? Usually the street was so quiet; now a crowd filled it. People ran to and fro, some shouting, some crying. And the densest of the crowd was about her mother's house.

What had happened? With her heart beating wildly Kate clutched the arm of a poor woman who stood near.

"What is the matter?" she asked.

"Why, it's murder!" said the woman, shivering as she spoke.

"You're a stranger, ain't you? You don't know old Mrs. Armour. She was killed last night for her money. Seems she kept a lot under her bed in a chest. She's all beat to pieces with a hatchet."

"Oh, Heaven!" screamed Kate. "Who did it?"

"Well," said the woman, "they say a man that used to work for her, and ran off with her daughter, was seen here last night. But maybe that's all talk. Why, how ill you look! You'll drop your baby. Here, help! help! There's a woman in a fit or something!"

And help came; kindly hands did all they could for the stranger with the lady's face and the beggar's clothes, whom no one recognized; but Heaven had been merciful. She was dead!

M. Z. D.

**THE TWO-HEADED EAGLE.**—The origin of the device of the eagle on national and royal banners may be traced to very early times. It was the ensign of the ancient kings of Persia and Babylon. The Romans

adopted various other figures on their camp standards; but Marius, B.C. 102, made the eagle alone the ensign of the legions, and confined the other figures to the cohorts. From the Romans the French, under the empire, adopted the eagle. The emperors of the Western Roman Empire used a black eagle; those of the eastern golden one. The sign of the Golden Eagle, met with in taverns, is an allusion to the emperors of the East. Since the time of the Romans almost every state that has assumed the designation of empire has taken the eagle for its ensign; Austria, Russia, Prussia, Poland, and France all took the eagle. The two-headed eagle signifies a double empire. The Emperors of Austria, who claimed to be considered the successors of the Emperors of Rome, used the double-headed eagle, which is the eagle of the eastern emperors with that of the western, typifying the "Holy Roman Empire," of which the original Emperors of Germany (now merged in the House of Austria) considered themselves as the representatives. Charlemagne was the first to use it, for when he became master of the whole of the German empire he added the second head to the eagle, A.D. 802, to denote that the empires of Rome and Germany were united in him.

### MARY'S LOVE LETTER.

"So you won't marry Hawkins Jessup," said Squire Bergamot, knitting his black eyebrows together, until they formed an ominous black bar across his forehead, and nearly frightened his bright-eyed daughter out of her senses.

But Mary Bergamot stood bravely to the guns of her little tit-tail.

"No, father," said she. "Oh, how can you ask me, father, when you know I don't love him, and never can."

"Never to a long word," said the squire.

"Yes, papa, I know that," said Mary. "But, indeed, indeed, I mean it."

"You mean it, do you?" said the squire, in slow and measured tones. "Now let me tell you what! It isn't that you don't like Hawkins Jessup, but that you've been goose enough to go and fall in love with that young—of George Lake!"

Mary turned very red.

"Papa!"

"There's no use missing matters," said the irate squire. "An artist, indeed! Why don't he go into whitewashing and painting and earn a decent living?"

"But, papa—"

"Needn't attempt to argue with me, miss!" said Squire Bergamot, sternly. "I'll have none of it, and so I tell you! If George Lake comes into my house, he'll be put out very quick! And so you may tell him."

So saying, the squire strode out of the room.

Mary looked after him with soft, sorrowful eyes. She was a delicate, oval-faced girl, with sunny brown hair and straight features, as unlike the rotund and positive squire's as light to darkness.

But, as she put down the iron with which she was "doing up" her father's shirts—Squire Bergamot would have thought it a crying sin to employ a laundress while his daughter enjoyed her ordinary health—she leaned up against the window where the arrowy sunbeams came in through the tremulous veil of heart-shaped morning-glory leaves, and drew from her pocket a note written in a strong, masculine hand.

"My dearest Mary: I love you. Will you promise to be my own wife, spite of all opposition? Will you tell me so with your own lips?"

"Ever yours, faithful to death, Gronox."

How her eyes glittered as she read and re-read the short and simple lines, pressing them finally to her red lips.

"I do love him! I will be his wife!" she murmured. "And I will tell him so the very first opportunity I get. Only papa!"

A momentary cloud stole over her serene brow at this, but it was transient.

"I don't believe in elopements," said Mary Bergamot, still riveting her eyes on the sheet of paper in her hand. "I never did. But if papa still persists in opposing our marriage, I will leave my home and go out into the world, hand in hand with George!"

Just as this revolutionary thought passed through her mind the door creaked on its hinges. A heavy, well-known footstep sounded on the threshold.

"It's papa!" cried Mary.

In her consternation our poor little heroine could not find the entrance to her pocket in the multitudinous folds of her dress. For a second she was in imminent danger of detection; then she hurriedly thrust the incendiary document into the yawning

mouth of a paper bag of choice seed-corn which hung by the kitchen window. And the next instant Squire Bergamot was in the room.

"Mary," said he, "go upstairs to the left-hand corner of my middle bureau-drawer and get me a clean pocket-handkerchief."

And Mary went out with a dubious glance at the nail on which the bag of "Early Sugar-Corn" hung.

When she returned the room was empty, and Squire Bergamot was just climbing up into his lumber-box waggon, in front of the point-fence.

"Bring it out here," said the squire. "I'm going over to Miss Polly Pepper's to get my empty cider cask. She might as well have the sense to return it herself!"

He stowed the pocket-handkerchief away in his pocket and was just taking up the reins when Mary rushed out again, crimson to the very roots of her hair.

"Father, that bag of seed-corn?"

"Oh, it's all right—it's all right," said the squire, placidly. "I promised a little to Miss Polly Pepper, and this is all ready shelled."

"But, father," gasped poor Mary, "let me tie it up first."

"Nonsense," said the squire. "I just folded over the top, and it'll go as snug as a thief in a mill, tight stop of my bags of meal."

Away he rattled over the stony road as he spoke, and poor Mary ran back into the kitchen to cry herself into a second Niobe.

"Oh, my letter, my letter!" sobbed she; "why was I such an idiot as to put it there?"

Miss Polly Pepper, a giant spinster of a very uncertain age, and a very certain infirmity of temper, opened the bag of seed-corn as the squire drove off.

"Might as well brought it before," said she. "Promised it to us last fall. I do despise those folks that are always putting off things. Merry upon me! what's this?" as she drew out the note; "some receipt that that shiftless Mary's tucked away here to get it out of the way! No, it isn't. It's a love-letter!—and to me—'My dearest Mary,'—and signed at the foot George Washington Bergamot, that's his name! Well, I do declare! Ain't he far gone? 'All opposition'—I s'pose he means Mary and my two brothers-in-law, that think a woman over forty hasn't no business to marry! But I'll see 'em before afore I'll let 'em overturn my matrimonial prospects—see if I don't! Tell him with my own lips! Of course I will! I'll go right over there at once. Delayed dangerous! And if he really is in such a hurry—"

Miss Polly's fingers trembled as she took her little cork-wool curls out of their papers, and pinned on a fresh collar, tied by a blue ribbon.

"Blue's the colour of love," said she, to herself, with a simper, "and it was so romantic of my dear George to think of proposing in a bag of seed-corn!"

The squire was at his supper when Miss Pepper walked in, flushed with her long expedition on foot.

"Sit down, and have a bit, won't you?" said the squire. "Mary, fetch a clean plate."

Miss Pepper took advantage of the momentary absence of her step-daughter absent to proceed directly to business.

"George," cried she, almost hysterically, "I'm yours!"

"Oh?" said the squire.

"For ever and ever!" said Miss Pepper, flinging herself upon the collar of his coat.

"Are you crazy?" said the squire, jumping up.

"You asked me to be your wife," said Miss Polly, meltingly.

"I didn't," said the squire.

"Then what does this letter mean, ah?" demanded Miss Polly. "It's as clear a declaration of love as ever was writ. And good ground to me on."

The squire started at the sheet of paper as Miss Pepper waved it triumphantly over his head.

"But I didn't write it," gasped he.

"Then who did?" demanded Miss Pepper, in a tone just at this moment Mary, entering with fresh tea and a clean plate, caught sight of the fluttering word.

"It's mine!" she cried, with a sudden dying of the cheek and glitter of the eye. "My letter! How dared you read it, Miss Pepper?"

"I got it out of the bag of seed-corn," protested the spinster.

"And I put it there for safe-keeping," blushing, acknowledged Mary Bergamot.

"Who wrote it?" sternly demanded the squire.

And Mary confessed.

"George Lake, papa!"

Miss Pepper went home, crying heartily, with mortified pride and disappointed expectations.

And the squire came to the conclusion that true love

would have its way in spite of all dismantling of the parents.

"Papa," said Mary, "may I have George?"  
"I don't care," said the squire.  
And that, in his case, passed for an affirmation. But the squire remains a widower still, and Miss Pepper's chances grow "smaller by degrees and beautifully less."—A. R.

## FACETIE.

**MEM. TO THOSE CONTEMPLATING MATRIMONY.**—Keep on contemplating it, and you won't hurt. **ROMANTICAL.**—The young lady who is consuming for love was, when last heard of, residing in Heigh! Ho!—burn!—Fun.

**A PARTING WONT.**—MRS. BRITANNIA (to Hopeful): "Now, be a good boy, don't be extravagant, and you shall be allowed to do as you like for a while while when you come back."

**ECOLOGICAL.**—**HEKKEK!** "Why have I such black ends? If you want to do well, always 'ave dirty black ends, cos then the swells don't like a takin' the 'up' change."

**FLOATING CAPITAL.**—The Captain Webb India-rubber tobacco-pouch is advertised. Putting this and that—the advertising and the India-rubber—together, we fancy that not Webb, but another of the Captive kind would have been more worthy of the testimonial.

**"TURN ABOUT."**—**GEORGE:** "I say, Tom, do take care! You nearly shot my father, then?"

**TOM:** "Oh! Don't say anything, there's a good fellow! Take a shot at mine!"—Punch.

**NO DOUBT.**—**MAMMA:** "Do you know it very rude to say 'shan't'?"

**LITTLE GIRL:** "Is it very rude, ma? I think I can be much ruder than that!"

**WILDEST AMUSEMENT.**—**MR. MUCKLESTON** (after missing his bird for the twentieth time): "I say, Gaskins, I do believe the birds are frightened at me!"

**OLD KEEPER** (blaudily): "They didn't ought to be, sir!"—Punch.

**FOR HIS NAMEAKE.**—A Ceylon paper reports a breach of promise case between Kandavalage Ischamey and "a respectable-looking individual named Kodakannamalageyapposinha." The jury naturally thought such a promise more honoured in the breach than the observance, and, reminding the plaintiff that single blessedness was better than so very much marriedness, gave her merely "nominal damages."—Fun.

**MORE CIVILIZATION.**—That great British institution, the breach of promise case, has, it appears, attended to India. The "Ceylon Times" reports a breach of promise case tried at Colombo, in which the plaintiff's name was Kandavalage Ischamey, and "the defendant was a respectable-looking individual named Kodakannamalageyapposinha." The plaintiff demanded 500, but she was nonsuited. What else could she expect? Fancy a woman wanting to share a name as that!—Judy.

**A MATTER OF OPINION.**—**FLOESIE** (earnestly): "Oh, mamma, am I such a naughty, wicked girl?"

**MAMMA:** "Why, what have you been doing, Floesie?"

**FLOESIE:** "I couldn't remem-remember my prayers, so—so—said, 'Tom, Tom, the piper's son, stole a pig and away he run.' And—an—nurse said I was a very naughty girl—and wicked!"—Fun.

**THE ORNAMENTAL V. THE USEFUL.**

**SERVANT:** "I suppose, ma'am, I shall not have to wait at table?"

**LADY:** "Oh, no, I want a housemaid."

**SERVANT:** "I suppose, ma'am, I shall not have to make the beds?"

**LADY** (surprised, but composedly): "Certainly not!"

**SERVANT** (shinking the place will wait): "Add I suppose, ma'am, I shall not be expected to answer the door?"

**LADY:** "Of course not! The fact is, I want a servant to look at, and I don't think you will do!"—Punch.

**POSTAL MEN.**—It is announced that "on and after the 1st of October, the postage of letters to the Dominion of Canada will be reduced to twopence-halfpenny per half-ounce." A twopenny-halfpenny affair used to be an expression of contempt; but since the Post-Office authorities have taken such a fancy to this peculiar sum, twopence-halfpenny has become quite respectable.—Judy.

**MONS. LAKS IT.**—The court-martial which has been sitting on the officers of the Vanguard has

sentenced the captain of that unfortunate vessel to be removed from his ship. This wounds a little ironical, as the ship is at present lying at the bottom of the sea. If the captain had been ordered to join her, now, the sentence would have sounded a little more like punishment.—Judy.

**VACATION VICARIOUSITIES.**  
**Hunting for seaside lodgings.**  
**Hotter hunting for Norfolk Howards.**  
**Fishing for stale compliments.**  
**Shooting stars by moonlight alone.**  
**Swimming in the head one's back.**  
**Deers talking very much scandal.**  
**Painting pretty faces with ugly bolly colours.**  
**Mixing in society in too great quantities.**  
**Spinning yarns tapay-turvy.**  
**Letting fall remarks from "the top of the morning."**—Judy.

**CATS NOT IN THE CAT SHOW.**  
The old cat who lives next door to our married man, and puts his wife up to "his dodges" over the garden wall.

The old Tom which is the only thing "as is any use to Mrs. Jones, when she 'aves them awful apapams."

The young puss who wheedles papa out of a new boonet every time he goes down Regent Street with her.

The lodging-house cat whose weekly consumption of soap, candles, meat, whiskey, sugar and tea so greatly astonishes the bachelor tenants.  
The cat that was going to make wife-kicking as uncommon in England as a fast-respecting Conservative in the House.—Fun.

## ONLY A WOMAN'S SHOE.

**ONLY A woman's shoe.**

A delicate number three;  
Worn, well worn, at the heel and toe,  
And buttonless, as you see.

'Tis a foolish thing, you say,

To treasure with so much care,  
This shoe and its mate, when hanging near,  
Is a jaunty, stylish pair.

A stylish pair? Ah, true;  
But dearer to me to-day  
Are these that her own fair hands put off  
The morn that she went away.

**Only a woman's shoe,**  
That has travelled through the house—  
Up stairs and down, and in and out,  
As quiet as any mouse.

Pilgrims on deeds of love—  
Martyrs to mother-care—  
Were the little feet that wore these shoes—  
Brave little feet and fair.

Go ask the boys and girls  
That are lonesome now and sad,  
And they'll tell you, with motherly grief,  
How merry they were and glad.

She's been gone a month or more,  
And with her the household light;  
But this telegram read—"My husband, dear,  
Your wife will be home to-night."

M. A. E.

**LORD AYLESFORD'S** horses were recently sold at Newmarket, Julius Cesar fetched 3,600*l.*; Southern Cross 1,300*l.*; Dukedom, 1,200*l.*; and Leveret, 1,100*l.*

**ACCIDENT TO DR. STAINER.**—Dr. Stainer, organist of St. Paul's Cathedral, was playing "Ave" last week at St. Michael's, Tenbury, where he and other musical men were staying with Sir Frederick Onslow, when the bell struck his face, severely injuring one of his eyes. Dr. Stainer was ordered to keep away from the light for at least ten days, and there is decided hope for the ultimate recovery of the sight.

**THE NEW NATIONAL OPERA HOUSE ON THE THAMES EMBANKMENT.**—It is only a few weeks since the first brick of the structure on the Thames Embankment, intended to become the first establishment of the kind in the world, was laid, yet the lines of the building are rapidly taking contour, and the whole enterprise is proceeding vigorously. It is believed, the promises of the architect, Mr. Francis Fowler, and the contractors, Messrs. Webster and Company, that the New Grand National Opera House shall be finished and ready for opening on the second day of May next, are kept, the construction of the building in so short a time will evidence great skill, enterprise, industry, and power

and will bring no small renown to both the builders and the architect.

## GEMS.

HOWEVER little we may have to do, let us do that little well.

Wise men make their enemies their instructors; fools become enemies to the teachers.

Nothing is more easy than to do mischief, nothing is more difficult than to suffer without complaining.

The higher you rise, the higher is your horizon; so, the more you know, the more you will see to be known.

If we lack the sagacity to discriminate nicely between our acquaintances, misfortune will readily do it for us.

If you have been tempted into evil, fly from it; it is not falling into the water, but lying in it that drowns.

Women are too apt to think that certain vices in a young man, like moles upon a fair skin, are beauty-spots.

INGRATITUDE is a crime so shameful, that the man was never found who would acknowledge himself guilty of it.

PACK your cares in as small a place as you can, so that you can carry them yourself and not let them annoy others.

If we embrace error we reject truth, and the rejection of truth necessarily involves the rejection of the Fountain of truth.

THOSE for the most part are the greatest thinkers who are the least talkers; as frogs cease to croak when light is brought to the water's edge.

## HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

**BAKED EGGS.**—Beat thoroughly six eggs, six tablespoons of sweet milk and one of flour, add a pinch of salt; melt a lump of butter in a small square pan; when hot, pour in the eggs, and bake immediately in a hot oven.

**TO CORN BEEF IN THE POT.**—Cover eight or nine pounds of lean beef with boiling water, add one teaspoon of salt, and boil until tender. It will be found much nicer than when corned in brine. If it is to be eaten cold, when it is cooked quite tender, draw out the bones, lay it in a tin basin, the bottom of which is perforated like a colander, press a plate firmly down upon it, and put a smoothing iron on top of the plate. Of course the plate must fit inside of the basin. The meat turns out in shape and cuts very solidly. A colander will answer, but has the disadvantage of sloping sides, and care must be taken to have the plate so small as not to rest upon the sides of the colander, and yet large enough to cover the meat almost entirely.

## MISCELLANEOUS.

**ADVANCE IN THE BANK RATE.**—The directors of the Bank of England on Thursday, the 14th ult., increased the rate of discount from 2½ to 3*l.* per cent.

**COALS** of the best quality has lately been found in large quantities in Western Colorado, the veins varying in thickness from twenty to fifty feet. Large beds of iron have also been discovered.

A committee has been appointed in Dublin to raise a memorial to the late Sir John Gray, M.P. It is stated that over 1,000*l.* has already been subscribed towards the object.

FOR the offence of sending putrid meat to the London market two Hertsfordshire butchers were on Tuesday each fined 3*l.* and two guineas costs by the presiding alderman at the Guildhall police court.

THE dairymen of Ohio are stated to be preparing to manufacture a cheese to weigh 25,000 lb. (nearly 13 tons), the cost of which is expected to be about 18,900 dollars. This is to be shown at the Centennial Exhibition at Philadelphia next year.

**HOW MUCH TO EAT.**—In order to keep the system in good order, food should be judiciously consumed. The harder a man works the more nutriment he requires. While a working man would need daily five pounds of solid-fatted food, two and a half would be enough for persons who lounge and sleep much. Life can be sustained two or three weeks on two ounces a day. A change of diet should follow a change of seasons—in winter, fat and sweets; in summer, fruits, fish, and lighter meats. Milk and eggs are blood food; steak flesh food; potatoes and wheat

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## NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

K. M.—You would be wrong to marry such a vulgar fellow.

A. M. C.—The woman who paints lays herself open to the suspicion that she drinks.

SCOTCHMAN.—Bosomy water, with a little common soda dissolved in it, is a good remedy for scurl. The best olive-oil should be used after each application.

US COMMS.—You are a servant engaged by the month, and must give a month's notice before you can lawfully leave.

A LUTY.—The young man is either a fool or something worse. You would not wisely in breaking off the acquaintance.

SKINFA JANE.—Dreams are coinages of the half-asleep brain, and are not more to be relied upon than prophecies.

M. W.—One brother is not bound to support another, except he be impelled to do so by fraternal feeling.

DIG.—The custom of wearing rings belongs to a very high antiquity; it has been traced to the source of civilization, the ancient Egyptians.

A. K.—The horse-shoe is of a very high antiquity, and the date of its invention unknown. The ancient Romans undoubtedly shod their horses.

ROSEBUD.—You are what may be fairly termed a fine, handsome girl, and do not require any advertising assistance to procure you a husband.

SMITH.—Children are admitted to orphan asylums by election or by influence through the committee of trustees.

W. P. G.—Ink spots on mahogany may be removed by touching them with oil of vitrol for a moment or so, and then washing off with warm water.

W. S. W.—The following will prevent sunburn:—Wash the face with a solution made by dissolving two drachms of borax and one drachm of alum in a pint of water every day before walking out.

D.—Bebecon, in the Hebrew language, meant a woman who, in the polite phraseology of our day, is said to be inclined to embonpoint. The literal translation of the word is "fat and full."

MADAME M.—A lady, after having met a gentleman several times without noticing him, although they had been introduced, should not suddenly take it into her head to bow to him.

BELLA.—A gentleman, on visiting at the house of a stranger, or where he was only a little known, should carry his hat with him in his hand, into the room into which he is ushered.

NELLY MAY.—The conduct of the gentleman you refer to in reference to the terms of his acceptance of your carte de visite is not appropriate to the name or the title you lavish upon him.

JURIA.—Write to the postmaster of the place where your uncle died, giving your uncle's full name and all the particulars you know of, and ask the post-master to put the matter in the hands of a trustworthy lawyer for you. Give your own address in full, so that the post-master or lawyer can communicate with you.

K. H. S.—Your canary bird is dumpy because you are careless and allow mice to enter his cage and eat the seed. The smell of mice is very obnoxious to canary birds, and they do not flourish when brought into contact with the pests. Hang the bird's cage where the vermin cannot reach it, and in a short time your pet will be all right.

PAUDRICE.—A mistress may search a servant's box on their premises if they think there is reasonable suspicion that there is stolen property in it, but it should be done in the presence of a constable.

THOMAS F.—If a man marries in a false name with the full knowledge of the woman, the marriage is an illegal one; but if she be ignorant of the fact the marriage is good.

O. T.—Meerschaum, a substance of which pipes are made, obtains its name from its resemblance to sea-foam, which the word means in the German language. It is stated to have been found floating on the Sea of Azof; it is also dug from the earth in Turkey.

ANNIE M. S.—Lemon-juice, if applied to the skin would destroy its texture, and, of course, injure the complexion. Are you in the habit of drinking very hot and very strong tea? If so, abandon it, for that is one of the chief causes of the painful flushings in ladies' faces.

HARFEL JANE.—Having bowed to the gentleman you gave him permission to address you, and we should be much surprised if he did not follow up the introduction so happily effected. You should read a little work on the subject, "Etiquette; or, How to Conform to the Rules of Good Society."

TANTALUS.—To oblige you and others we republish the recipe. To whiten the hands:—Take a wineglassful of eau de Cologne, and another of lemon-juice, then scrape two cakes of brown Windsor soap to a powder, and mix well in a mould. When hard it will be an excellent soap for whitening the hands.

WOOBINS and SROWNSOP are each good looking, and they know it better than we can possibly do. The only advice we can give them is to take good care of themselves, and not be in a hurry to marry. Girls who marry before they are eighteen are old women in appearance before they are thirty.

JESSIE.—See him only every other time he comes, and let some other gentlemen hang around you and receive your smiles in the presence of number one. Meanwhile keep your heart well in hand and do your best in teaching. There are young men who think lady-teachers may be innocently and safely flirted with.

ROSE.—We are glad you have the uncle—he will probably enrich you some day. Humour him a little and do not run away from him. There are forms of feminine employment in which a little money is earned from the beginning, but hardly enough to sustain you according to your ideas—and none of them so easy, we think, as cultivating and reforming your old uncle.

T. T.—Young ladies have many ways of letting young men know that they cannot listen to declarations that have no practical bearing. One way is to deny them the pleasure of the society till they acquire a right to it by an engagement. This is usually safe, and is always honourable. Another—of which we cannot speak so favourably—is to threaten them with a rival. You had better bring about some conversation and understanding as to a marriage.

## LESSONS TAUGHT BY LITTLE THINGS.

Men are prone to underrate themselves and what they do. Because their work is unimportant, and they think it is useful too. Yet not a blow was ever struck that made the anvil ring. But had its place in that vast world where industry is king.

A penny, trifling though it be, The smallest of all coin; Becomes the very heart of wealth When it and others join; So little streams that from the hills Come laughing in their glee, When they flow down the rocky shore, Expand into a sea.

Even from the simple seed which ranks Among the smallest things, And seems a lifeless particle, The richest harvest springs; And effort, however small, If useful and combined, Shall build the grandest monuments Ever raised by hand or mind.

Look at the granite corner-stone In its deep solitude, Alone it does not seem to be; With mighty power imbued! But as stone after stone is laid, The towering columns rise, Till stands a temple beautiful Revealed against the skies.

Then let us value every act, However small we do, And measure it by usefulness, To which it must be true; For he has wisdom learned who knows The fruit that labour brings, Who owns the wondrous potency Of even little things.

S. C.—It is being made increasingly difficult to enter the best schools of medicine without a good education. This is hard on some young men, but it is best for the community, and tends to raise the profession, and when you are yourself a doctor you will approve of it. Success as a physician turns on many things so generally dependent on a good preliminary education that we recommend you to labour for it, great at the cost of some delay. You are not yet hopelessly old.

T. L.—We cannot enter into the tobacco smoking controversy, but we must stoutly contend that the practice is injurious to young people. Upon no single point are the medical faculty more agreed than upon that. The health and growth of body mainly depend on the healthy development of the brain, which, in the male of our species, does not arrive at maturity until about the twenty-third year. Anything that retards its development, like such a powerful narcotic as tobacco, must be injurious to the whole system. So that it is upon a purely physical ground that we object to youths and very young men indulging in the habit of smoking. If, as is frequently proved, it has a tendency to soften and vitiate the structure of the brain it must be a pernicious and destructive habit.

A SUFFRAGAN.—To prepare the essence of beef take a pound of fresh beef, as free as possible from fat, cut it up into very small pieces, or, what is better, shred it with a fork. Sprinkle over it a little salt, and put the meat into a stout stone bottle, such as mead or Scotch ale comes in, cork tightly and tie the cork down with a string. The cork is usually not put in until steam begins to escape from the bottle. Stand the bottle in a vessel of cold water, which should slowly be brought up to the boiling point, and kept at it for at least four hours. To prevent the bottle from breaking against the side of the vessel, by the movement of the boiling water, it should be secured by a piece of cord. Strain through a piece of coarse linen, then let the liquid stand awhile in a cup, and, with a spoon, carefully skim off any fat which may have risen to the surface. It may be seasoned to the taste with pepper and salt. The liquid obtained in this manner is one of the most agreeable and highly nutritious articles of diet which can be prepared for the sick.

ANNIE B., twenty, medium height, light hair, blue eyes, wishes to correspond with a respectable young gentleman.

TOX, twenty-three, medium height, fair complexion, blue eyes, considered good looking, wishes to correspond with a young lady.

E. S., twenty-one, medium height, dark hair and eyes, would make a good wife, wishes to correspond with a respectable young man with a view to matrimony.

IVANHOE, twenty, light complexion, rather tall, has good prospects, wishes to correspond with a good looking and cheerful young lady between eighteen and nineteen.

VALERIA A., tall, dark, of a very loving disposition and respectable family, would like to correspond with a young gentleman, must be in a good position and fond of home.

MARY, nineteen, medium height, good looking, and domesticated, wishes to correspond with a respectable young man about twenty-three, with a view to matrimony.

M. M., nineteen, medium height, dark hair and eyes, very loving disposition, wishes to correspond with a respectable young man about twenty-one; a tradesman preferred.

A. B., twenty-three, medium height, dark hair and eyes, loving disposition wishes to correspond with a thoroughly domesticated young lady with a view to matrimony.

J. G., a driver in the Royal Artillery, fresh complexion, brown hair and hazel eyes, wishes to correspond with a young lady about nineteen or twenty, with a loving disposition and fond of home.

FLASHING LIGHT, a signaller in the Royal Navy, twenty, 5ft. 6in., blue eyes, would like to correspond with a young lady with a view to matrimony; respondent must be about the same age, fond of home, and of a loving disposition.

CARTROSHAW, a signaller in the Royal Navy, twenty, 5ft. 6in., dark blue eyes, considered handsome, would like to correspond with a young lady with a view to matrimony; respondent must not be older than himself and of a loving disposition; a country girl preferred.

ROSSIER, a seaman gunner in the Royal Navy, twenty-three, 5ft. 7in., fair complexion, of loving disposition, would like to correspond with a well-educated and domesticated young lady from seventeen to twenty, who is fond of home and children and could make a home happy.

MAIN BRACE, a seaman in the Royal Navy, twenty-four, 5ft. 6in., blue eyes, loving disposition and considered good looking and the pet of the mess, wishes to correspond with a young lady about twenty-one, with a view to matrimony; respondent must be of a loving disposition, fond of home and children and calculated to make a sailor a loving wife; a London girl preferred.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED.

G. S. is responded to by—Billy, loving, domesticated, fond of home and children.

LOVING LUCY by—Philoa, twenty, 5ft. 11in., and thinks he is all loving Lucy requires.

ELLA by—A. H., seventeen, who thinks he answers her description of a gentleman.

J. M. C. by Evelyn A., fair hazel eyes, fond of home, and thinks she is all J. M. C. requires.

FLORENCE by—J. E. C. A., seaman in the Royal Navy Torpedo Establishment, twenty-three, 5ft. 9in., dark complexion, hazel eyes, and thinks he is all Florence requires.

T. B., twenty-two, tall, dark hair and eyes, considered good looking, wishes to correspond with a young lady about eighteen, who must be nice looking and domesticated.

MICROT, eighteen, dark hair, considered handsome, well educated and domesticated, would like to correspond with a young gentleman about twenty-one; respondent must have a little money of his own; a mechanic preferred.

MARY and SARAH by Harold and George, two young gentlemen of good appearance. Harold is dark and thinks he is all Mary requires, George is fair and prefers Sarah. Money is no object to either, as they both are independent.

FLORENCE and ROSE by—Albert and Alfred. Albert is twenty-two, medium height, dark complexion, of loving disposition, and prefers Florence. Alfred is twenty-three, medium height, dark complexion, would make a loving husband, prefers Rose. Both are friends and seamen in the Royal Navy.

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